

GOLDSMITHS
University of London

COUNCIL & ACADEMIC BOARD

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2010

Present: Mrs Alyson McGarrigle (in the Chair), Ms Sharon Alleyne, Ms Jennifer Bain, Dr Philip Broadhead, Mr John Ginman, Mr Barry Hayward, Dr Deirdre Osborne, Ms Eleanor Saunders, Ms Marcia Williams.

Apologies: Ms Alison Ahern, Ms Francesca Bancarino, Mr Chris Pearson, Ms Colleen Toomey.

In attendance: Mr Michael Dick, Mr Matthew Grew (Secretary), Rev'd Adele Rees, Ms Rachel Soper, Ms Ellen Tsang.

1 MINUTES

Resolved:

to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2010.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

- (i) that the Annual Report on Appeals & Complains for 2009-10 was to be prepared for Academic Board in December 2010; it would come to this Committee at its next meeting. The Committee hoped to receive the Report for 2010-11 at its Summer meeting, thus resuming the expected reporting schedule. [**Minute 16(iii) 12 May 2010 refers.**]
- (ii) that ongoing difficulties producing data for monitoring information on Race, Gender & Disability [**Minute 16(ii) 12 May 2010 refers**] would be discussed under agenda item 12.

3 STANDING ORDERS

Noted:

the revised Standing Orders in force for all Goldsmiths Committees from 1 September 2010 (10-338).

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

Noted:

the College's Conflicts of Interests Policy, and its potential implications for the obligations of members of the Committee (10-339).

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted:

the terms of reference, composition and membership of the Committee for the academic year 2010-11 (10-399).

Secretary's Note: it was subsequently confirmed that Professor Lisa Adkins had left the College during Summer 2010. A replacement member would be sought before the next meeting.

6 REPORT OF THE ESTATES & FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

Received:

a report on access improvements to the College from the Director of Estates & Facilities (10-400).

Noted:

Although 80% of College buildings (without including the New Academic Building, which was fully accessible) were now accessible, Deptford Town Hall still lacked disabled access, and provision had not yet been made for safe egress from the Richard Hoggart Building in the event of an emergency or of lift failure.

A project to install a lift in DTHB had been rejected by the planning authority in 2008; the Estates Department was currently exploring alternative options, including the provision of a portable platform lift, as well as the provision of disabled toilets.

The Committee expressed concern that disabled refuges had not yet been provided in the Richard Hoggart Building; it was hoped that this would be addressed as a matter of urgency.

It was noted that campus signage had been manufactured, and installation was in the hands of contractors.

The Committee observed that the Disability Audit carried out in 2001 had set the agenda for campus improvements over the following years; it was felt that an external audit might once again be appropriate, to provide a programme for future campus development.

7 REPORT OF THE COLLEGE-WIDE REVIEW OF THE WIDENING PARTICIPATION AGENDA

Received:

a report from the WP Review Panel (10-347).

Noted:

The Committee recognised that work to widen participation in HE was essential; it fully supported the proposition that principles of WP should be embedded in the College at every level. It was noted that this proposition was fundamental to the Committee's own work with regard to the E&D agenda. The Committee looked forward to consultation on proposals for the concrete form the strategy outlined in the Review might take.

The Committee expressed dismay that Equality & Diversity issues had not been explicitly addressed in the Review; the close relationship between Widening Participation and the E&D agenda had not been acknowledged. It did not appear that specialist E&D expertise had been sought by the panel.

The Committee felt that the Panel should have attempted to define, at least for the medium-term, the precise categories of student the College would commit itself to recruit in its programme of Widening Participation. It was noted that disability was not mentioned in the Report.

The Committee noted that the difficulty of adjusting to full-time study was often a major barrier to the retention of some students once they had arrived at Goldsmiths; provision for part-time study would address this, but fundamental re-configuration of many degree programmes would be necessary if these were to be delivered in part-time mode.

It was felt that focussed support should be given to students from traditionally excluded backgrounds once they had begun their studies. Concern was expressed with regard to current pedagogic practice, particularly methods of assessment. The need for continuing professional development for staff in this context was stressed.

It was agreed that the Committee's comments on the Review should be reported to the panel Chair.

Arising from this discussion, it was noted that the short Goldsmiths promotional trailer available at www.gold.ac.uk failed to reflect the diversities of Goldsmiths' staff and students; no Black, Asian or disabled staff or students seemed to be shown. This serious failing was also felt to apply to the corresponding videos for Art, Media & Communications and Music. As well as being unrepresentative of the College population, the Committee felt this to be particularly regrettable in the light of the WP agenda, and the College's desire to recruit students from the surrounding area. The Committee observed that E&D considerations should form part of tender specifications for any contracted service, in this case the production of recruitment materials. It was agreed that the Secretary would raise this issue with the Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications, for report to the next meeting.

8 REPORT OF THE DISABILITY COORDINATOR

Received:

a report from the Disability Coordinator (10-401).

Resolved:

to establish a Working Party, to be convened by Jennifer Bain, to draft a Disability Action Plan for 2010-13, to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Noted:

The Working Party would give particular consideration to issues of assessment (including extenuating circumstances), learning outcomes, employability and accessibility of information. It would also consider means of developing guidance to enable academic staff to support students with mental health difficulties. Core membership of the Working Party would include John Ginman, Barry Hayward, Adele Rees & Marcia Williams; the Working

Party would also seek to include colleagues with appropriate expertise and responsibilities (in Pedagogy, Assessment etc.) from across the College.

9 REPORT OF THE INTERIM EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ADVISOR

Received:

a report from the Interim Equality & Diversity Advisor (10-402).

Noted:

- (i) that a draft Transgender Policy would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting;
- (ii) that the staff Wellbeing Survey results were about to be published, and would be considered in due course;
- (iii) that following 'Two Ticks' & 'Stonewall' accreditation, Staff Development would begin to provide workshops for members of staff;
- (iv) that the Diversity Champions forum had not met since January 2010;
- (iii) that Ellen Tsang would return to the HR Department at the end of November, and begin a handover from Marcia Williams of the role of Equality & Diversity Advisor.

10 ANNUAL MONITORING OF RACE, GENDER & DISABILITY

Received:

an oral report on arrangements for monitoring staff by race, gender & disability, from the Interim Equality & Diversity Advisor.

Noted:

- (i) that the Committee had not received a report on Race, Gender & Disability since May 2009;
- (ii) that data held on the Pyramid (HR) database was incomplete and unreliable;
- (iii) that projects were currently underway in HR, Student Services & QPAG to improve the quality of data held, the standard of HESA and other statutory returns, and the general quality of management information.
- (iv) that it would be necessary, as part of this work, to survey the current Goldsmiths workforce from scratch in order to produce information on race and disability.

Resolved:

to receive a staff monitoring report from HR at the next meeting of the Committee, by which time sufficient data should have been gathered to provide a meaningful overview for consideration.

11 EQUALITY ACT 2010

Received:

a briefing from the Equality Challenge Unit (10-404) outlining the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

12 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

Received:

the annual report of the Committee's activity for 2009-10 (10-405).

Resolved:

to approve the Report for consideration by Council.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

that members should raise agenda items for future meetings by contacting the Secretary.

14 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Noted:

that meetings for the remainder of the Session would be held in DTHB 110 the following dates:

Tuesday 8 February 2010 - 2.30pm

Tuesday 24 May 2010 – 2.30pm

Matthew Grew
October 2010