GOLDSMITHS
University of London

COUNCIL

JOINT CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010

Present: Mr Hugh Jones (in the Chair), Mr Chris Pearson, Ms Dail Francois, Dr Des Freedman, Mr John Wadsworth, Ms Suzanne Stead

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

Apologies: Dr Philip Broadhead, Professor Jane Powell

OPEN BUSINESS

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

Noted:

that all Committee members had received the paper regarding the Committee's terms of reference, composition and membership (10-383) and had no comments.

2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

Noted:

that all Committee members had received the College's Conflict of Interest Policy (10-339) and had no comments.

3 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Noted:

that all Committee members had received the paper regarding amendments to standing orders (10-338) and had no comments.

4 MINUTES (JNCC8 and JNCC9)

Noted:

that the minutes of JNCC 9 incorrectly stated that the date of the next meeting was 23 February 2011, and that the date of the next meeting was, in fact, 20 October 2010.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (JNCC8 and JNCC9)

1. UCU asked what, if any, progress had been made as regards the VT Working Party. The Director of Human Resources responded that there had been no further progress since the last meeting. This was due to changes in the staffing of the Human Resources Department, and new pieces of urgent work taking priority, He noted that he would be progressing this issue, now that ac full staffing complement was in place.

2. UNISON asked what, if any, progress had been made as regards the equal pay audit. The Director of Human Resources responded that the situation was the same as that regarding the VT Working Party. He noted that the contract of Marcia Williams (Interim Equalities and Diversity Advisor) was to be extended and thus that she would be able to assist with moving it forward.

3. UNISON asked for an up-date on the status of Reprographics. The Registrar and Secretary responded that due, in large part, to issues related to the Voluntary Severance Scheme, there had been little change, and that he would follow-up with Dr Basem El-Haddadeh (the Director of IT Services). He noted that he did however know that, with regard to the design arm of the service, permanent, as opposed to agency, staff were being engaged and that this was a positive step as it was a more cost effective approach to staffing.

The Registrar and Secretary noted that he had not formally welcomed Mr John Wadsworth, who had replaced Professor Marjorie Mayo as the new UCU President for the College.

6 BUDGET

The Director of Finance noted that the ‘Budget’ agenda item did not pertain specifically to the College’s actual 2010/11 budget, but rather to the College’s financial environment. She noted that the Browne Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review had now been publicised; change within this environment was inevitable, and that it would be essential for the College to be flexible in order for it to respond effectively. She noted that we did not yet have the precise detail of the effects on Goldmsiths and that the most that could be done at this time was to scenario plan and forecast as best possible.

She noted that the two decisions which had been made by the Government which were known would have an impact on the College. One, that there was to be a removal of teaching funding from HEFCE (the College currently receive £14 million) and two, that there was to be a removal of the current cap on tuition fees. She noted that even though we were now aware of the removal of a large proportion of teaching funding, the precise detail was still unknown. She noted that, it would be necessary for the College to increase tuition fees.

The Director of Finance noted that, even taking into account the savings that would be made following the introduction of the current Staff Cost Reduction Programme and following the introduction of the PensionPlus scheme, further savings would be absolutely necessary to ensure the College's financial sustainability. She explained that these savings would be made in the most 'pain free' way possible, but that it was to be realistic to expect that some savings would have to come from staffing-related costs

UCU noted that some significant sources of funding which the College received (attributable to the Department of Professional and Community Education) were outside of the scope of the Browne Review, but that despite this it was still possible that they would be lost. The Registrar and Secretary concurred that there were many unknowns.

UCU asked whether the results of the National Student Survey had any impact on HEFCE and the way in which Higher Education Institutions were funded. The Registrar and Secretary responded that they did not.

The Registrar and Secretary noted that Computing and Psychology were not considered as 'STEM' subjects by HEFCE, and that they fell into 'Price Group C' (Medicine falls into 'Price Group A' and the 'traditional' sciences fall into 'Price Group B'). He noted that HEFCE had already confirmed that Price Groups C and D would not receive any funding

UCU asked for clarity regarding when cuts in funding would take effect. The Director of Finance responded that specific timings were not known, but that some cuts should be expected in the year 2011/12. The Registrar and Secretary added that he had been led to believe that the 'bad year' would be 2012/13. The Director of Finance noted that HEFCE had advised that they would protect institutions as far as was possible in the year 2011/12.

UCU asked whether, in light of what had been discussed, the deficit for the following year had been revised. The Director of Finance responded that it was estimated that the deficit would be £1 million. She noted that, although it was far from guaranteed that they would acquiesce to it, the College was to request from HEFCE £0.5 million pounds for transition.

UCU commented that they felt that to build forecasts on assumptions was a dangerous practice. They also commented that if the College was to 'dumb down' due to financial constraints it could have seriously detrimental consequences as regards its ability to attract overseas students. The Registrar and Secretary noted that the only area in which the College generated a surplus was through its recruitment of overseas students, and that it was important that how it could continue to do this was reviewed. He noted that in the College's favour was that it had a good reputation and the pound was weak; however, he also noted that not in the College's favour were the restrictions introduced by the UK Boarder Agency and the competition from other High Education institutions.

UNISON stated that all organisations invariably have 'financial leaks', and asked what the College's were, and what was being done to plug those leaks. The Director of Finance responded that the way in which fees were being collected was being reviewed so as to ensure that it was being done in the most effective way possible. She noted that she was not aware of a serous amount of fraud within the College, and that there were internal checks in place to protect the College from it. The Registrar and Secretary commented that Agresso had proven to be an effective tool in relation to this and that the Director of Finance had been working with the Director of Student Services to reduce the amount of 'fee debt.'

The Director of Finance noted that in view of the anticipation that the College's staffing budget would take a 'large hit' in the future that it was important the College was doing all that it could to stem unnecessary losses in other areas.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that the College would continue to look at offering scholarships. He noted that the College viewed scholarships in a very positive light.

In continued discussion of how the College could make cost savings, UCU commented that the College was not an energy efficient organisation, and that this was an example of a cost reduction area. UNISON agreed, citing the College's unnecessarily hot water as an example. The Registrar and Secretary noted that the Estates Department had been looking at ways of maximising the College's energy efficiency. He acknowledged that, due to the age of many of the College's buildings, energy efficiency was more of a problem for Goldsmiths than it might be for other organisations. UNISON stated that it was not just energy that was wasted by the College, but also resources such as stationary. The Registrar and Secretary advised that improvements (for example multi-functional devices) were being looked into by the Procurement Team. UCU suggested that the College might wish to consider moving away from IT software which had a relatively high licence fee to that which has a lower or no fee at all (for example Open Office).

The Registrar and Secretary responded that there was no question but that the College would look to reduce its non-staff costs before its staff costs. UNISON stated that the College was already losing a significant number of staff through the Staff Cost Reduction Programme, and needed to consider what the impact of losing more would be on its service provision. The Registrar and Secretary agreed, noting that a strong service provision was absolutely key to safe-guarding the College's future – especially if tuition fees were to increase.

The Registrar and Secretary noted that a positive outcome of the Browne Review was the proposal that, in the future, part-time students would have access to funding. He added that if there were an increase in the numbers of part-time students the dynamics of College life would change.

The Registrar and Secretary summarised, noting that most Higher Education Institutions had a difficult time ahead of them, and that many of the details of what would shape this time / what the future would look like were unknown. He added that the College would need to be flexible, and would seek input from its staff and students as regards steps which it might take to ensure its future survival and strength. The Registrar and Secretary noted that more would be known by the time of the Warden's Open Meeting in November.

UNISON commented that it was already known that there would be a lack of funding available to the College given the nature of the subjects which it specialises in (i.e. Arts), and asked whether it was thus considering diversifying its subject base. The Registrar and Secretary responded that this would be something that the College would look into, but noted that it may be restricted by the costs associated with introducing new subjects. He noted that there may be institutions which are forced to close in the future but may have strong, individual, departments which it might be possible to transfer to the College.

7 FUND OUR FUTURES

UCU advised that they had asked the Warden at a meeting approximately two weeks previously whether he would be willing to speak at the Fund Our Futures demonstration, and whether the College was in support of it. They advised that they were still awaiting an answer. The Registrar and Secretary stated that he would follow up with the Warden.

UCU noted that their perception was that some departments of the College were embracing the Fund Our Futures campaign more than others. The Registrar and Secretary responded that the Director of Human Resources had circulated, to every department of the College, information regarding employee participation at the demonstration, but that he could send a reminder. UCU requested that a GC Info was issued. The Director of Human Resources responded that he was happy to send a reminder email to Heads of Departments and asked that UCU representatives should let him know if there were departments who seemed particularly recalcitrant in responding to the previous email.

8 STAFF COST REDUCTION PROGRAMME

The Director of Human Resources noted that the process of considering applications made under the Voluntary Severance Scheme was not yet complete; this was in-part due to the process of identifying creative 'change' solutions which would allow for applications to be approved. He advised that, although the deadline for applications had now passed, a number of individuals had been granted extensions.

The Director of Human Resources noted 165 expressions of interest in the Voluntary Severance Scheme had been received (which represented approximately 12 % / 13% of the College's workforce) and that of these, 112 had come from support departments. He noted that by 15th October 2010 approximately 85 formal applications had been received, 18 of which had been approved, 17 of which had come from those who were ineligible to apply and 50 of which were still being considered. He advised that the 18 applications approved so far represented an estimated saving of £250,000 per annum. He noted that the total savings resulting from the scheme would probably not been known until January 2011.

UCU asked whether an exit survey was being conducted so as to understand why individuals wished to leave the College, especially given the disproportionately large number of expressions of interests which had come from support departments. The Director of Human Resources noted that there were more support, than academic, staff at the College and that the level of applications was not particularly disproportionate or surprising.

The Registrar and Secretary noted that those in support roles had more potential career paths to go down than academic staff. UNISON stated that if there were a disproportionately large number of applications from any department there should be an investigation into whether there was an underlying reason.

UCU noted that they were aware of concerns relating to the IT Services Department, in particular whether the businesses cases which had led to applications having been approved were sufficiently robust and whether there was a possibility that those staff who remained would be left to shoulder an unfair amount of work. They also noted that it seemed that three individuals whose applications had been approved were being replaced on a like-for-like basis. The Registrar and Secretary replied that the bigger picture needed to be considered. He advised that genuine cost savings had been made – that those individuals were not being replaced like-for-like. UCU stated that a formal response regarding the concerns which they had about IT Services would be welcomed. The

Registrar and Secretary responded that he could not provide one at that time, but that he would in the future.

8 USS CHANGE PROPOSALS

The Director of Human Resources advised that all staff who were members of USS (or were eligible to join it) had been sent information packs regarding the consultation process which began today and was due to end on 22nd December 2010. He noted that any individuals who wished to submit comments to USS as part of the consultation process could do so through their website. He also noted that he would pass directly to USS any comments which the Trade Unions had, or that he would provide the Trade Unions with the necessary contact details to allow them to do it themselves.

The Director of Human Resources noted that if there were any changed to be made to the USS , following the consultation, they would be agreed by March 2011 and implemented by April. He added that the pension age would move to 66 in 2020 in line with the statutory age.

UCU noted that they were not comfortable with the proposed changes to the USS and that the consultation process had not been drawn up with UCU negotiators. They asked whether the College would be prepared to hold a formal ballot regarding the proposed changes, and then advise the USS of the outcome, or, if it would not, whether it would be prepared to provide the details of relevant staff to UCU so that they could. The Director of Human Resources advised that Goldsmiths was content that the consultation process fulfilled all statutory obligations and that it did not see the purpose in balloting staff on proposals that were not on offer. UCU responded that if the College was to agree to what they had asked that it would be a show of good faith and would allow for a genuine response to be received. The Director of Human Resources responded that all members and potential members would have an adequate opportunity to comment on the proposed changes and that he would be happy to pass to the USS any comments which the Trade Unions wished to make. UCU responded that this was a shame. The Registrar and Secretary stated that he agreed with the Director of Human Resources that this was a time to ‘do things by the statutory book.’ UCU asked whether a GC Info in which UCU’s views were expressed could be circulated. The Director of Human Resources declined this request, noting that all statutory requirements were being met.

9 PENSIONPLUS

The Director of Finance noted that information regarding the PensionPlus scheme was available on the College’s website and that open meetings for staff had been scheduled for 14th and 27th October 2010. She noted that the scheme was a relatively ‘pain-free’ way of saving money.

UNISON asked whether information regarding the PensionPlus scheme would be captured on payslips. The Director of Finance advised that she was unsure but committed to look into it. UCU noted that people were always suspicious of anything that appeared to be ‘a free lunch.’ The Registrar and Secretary agreed that communication was important.

10 CLEANING STAFF

The Registrar and Secretary confirmed that the cleaning company engaged by the College had given notice that they wished to terminate their contract. He explained the College would re-specify what it wanted from a cleaning company and would then go to tender. He noted that it would be necessary for the new company's salaries to take account of the London Living Allowance. UNISON probed regarding timescales. The Registrar and Secretary indicated that he hoped that a new company would be engaged in the next six to twelve months. The Director of Human Resources noted the importance of ensuring that all TUPE-related arrangements were appropriate. UCU asked whether the new company would be required to recognise the relevant Trade Union(s). The Director of Human Resources noted that such a requirement would be unlawful as it would constitute discrimination against individuals who were not trade union members. UNISON asked whether the college would consider bringing the cleaning service 'in-house.' The Registrar and Secretary commented that the College would make the 'smartest' decision financially.

11 OUTCOME OF THE JNCC MEETING OF 28 SEPTEMBER

The Registrar and Secretary advised that, as promised, he had taken the Trade Unions' request that the porters be eligible for voluntary severance to the Senior Management Team and that the outcome had been reported to UNISON. He advised that detailed conversations were currently underway between Nick Jones (Head of Facilities) and the porters. UNISON agreed that a working group had been established, as had been promised. The Director of Human Resources noted that the relevant HR Business Partner was ensuring that the outcomes of the extraordinary JNCC were being honoured, and that he would ensure that the Trade Unions were kept informed. UCU stated that they wished to be kept informed regarding the outcome of the consultation with service users. The Registrar and Secretary noted that he had asked Nick Jones and Michael Dick (Director of Estates and Facilities) to undertake this consultation. UNISON stated that they hoped that this process and its outcomes would be transparent.

UNISON noted a concern around on-campus safety during evenings. The Registrar and Secretary noted this concern and noted that it was a challenge striking a balance between having an open campus and ensuring the safety of those who were on it.

Dr Freedman left the meeting.

12 NURSERY OPENING HOURS

The Registrar and Secretary stated that it had been necessary to change the Nursery's opening hours from: 8.30am to 5.30pm to: 9am to 5pm. He noted that Head of Departments had been asked to exercise flexibility with regard to the working hours of staff (and also students) whose children attended the Nursery.

The Registrar and Secretary stated that terms of reference for the future childcare working group would be drawn up and sent to the trade unions for comment the following week.

UCU stated that despite the flexibility which Heads of Department had been asked to exercise, the new opening hours had been problematic for both staff and students. They added that some Users were concerned about the fees which they were expected to pay given that the opening hours had been reduced. They asked whether it was financially viable to 'run down' the Nursery (i.e. not to open it up to new users) and whether the College would reconsider admitting, where possible, those children on the waiting list. UNISON noted that it would have been sensible if the College had originally taken the decision to close the Nursery in 2011. The Registrar and Secretary stated that the decision had already been taken not to admit new users.

UNISON stated that staff of the Nursery were now content with their situation, but that they had been put through an unnecessarily difficult time. The Director of Human Resources stated that all those who had been involved in the process of closing the Nursery down had been a little suprised by the decision taken by the SMT to keep it open for longer than had been originally intended, and that they had responded as best they could. It had shown in his view a genuine openness to consultation at all stages by SMT and the change of decision inevitably meant a change in impact on staff. UNISON responded that they did not believe that the decision itself was the wrong one, but that they believed that it should have been taken in the first place. The Registrar and Secretary stated that there were learning points which should be kept in mind for the future. He also stated that he would speak with the Director of Student Services with regard to the concerns that had been raised about fees. He clarified with UCU that the concerns regarding the opening hours mostly concerned the morning. UCU encouraged the College to establish the working group as soon as was possible.

47 Next Meeting

that the next meeting would be held on 23 February 2011