

**GOLDSMITHS  
University of London**

**COUNCIL**

**JOINT CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2011**

Present: Mr Hugh Jones (in the Chair) – Registrar and Secretary  
Dr Philip Broadhead – Pro Warden  
Mr Chris Pearson – Director of Human Resources

Ms Dail Francois - UNISON  
Dr Des Freedman - UCU  
Mr John Wadsworth – UCU  
Ms Ruth Levin – UNISON  
Ms Suzanne Stead - UNISON

In attendance: Ms Kathryn Nesbitt (Secretary)

Apologies: Professor Jane Powell and Ms Sally Townsend

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1. MINUTES (JNCC10)**

There were no amendments to make to the minutes of the JNCC10.

**2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

It was agreed that matters arising would be covered by items 4 – 10.

**3. PROGRESS UPDATES**

**3.1 CLEANING CONTRACT**

Noted:

It was noted that the College's contract with Resource had been extended until May in order for a full requirements specification to be drafted.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that, inter alia, consideration was currently being given to whether there should be more focus on cleaning public spaces than on cleaning

offices. UNISON stated that if there was to be a change in focus a health and safety risk assessment should be carried out; they expressed particular concern about dust, and staff who suffered from allergies.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that no changes to the employment status of cleaning staff were anticipated i.e. that those staff currently seconded to Resource would be seconded to the successful bidder and remain on the College's payroll. The Director of Human Resources noted that the London Living Allowance would apply to all contracted cleaning staff as a contractual requirement.

UNISON asked what progress had been made as regards an 'in-house' bid for the cleaning contract. The Registrar and Secretary responded that he had asked Nick Jones to look into the viability of cleaning being brought in-house.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that consideration was currently being given to whether there should be more focus on cleaning public spaces than on cleaning offices. UNISON stated that if there was to be a change in focus a health and safety risk assessment should be carried out; they expressed particular concern about dust, and staff who suffered from allergies.

Unison noted that Resource did not have a recognition agreement with UNISON, and asked for an assurance that the successful bidder would be one which recognised a trade union. The Director of Human Resources responded that this matter would be looked into.

### **3.2 FACILITIES SOFT SERVICES**

The Registrar and Secretary noted that discussions were shortly to be held between the College and UNISON.

### **3.3 CHILDCARE PROVISIONS**

It was noted that a review of the College's childcare provisions was being led by Professor Linda Pring. The review involved carrying out a survey to identify the needs of both staff and students, following which a variety of potential options would be considered.

The Registrar and Secretary reported that the Students' Union was in the process of working on a business proposal on childcare provision.

## **4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS**

The Registrar and Secretary noted that the College needed to respond to the challenges facing Higher Education and the College in particular in the coming years to ensure a positive and successful future. It would need to work more efficiently, economically and effectively, reducing expenditure and also growing its income. It was emphasised that this needed to be done in such a way that it complemented the ethos of the College.

It was reported that a first draft revised College strategy would be discussed at the next Council meeting. The Registrar and Secretary advised that this would include consideration of four possible new initiatives identified by the Blue Skies Group.

These were: a Management School, a Liberal Arts Degree, CAST, and the expansion of the University of London's external programmes.

In addition, some organizational changes were under discussion. The Registrar and Secretary advised that SMT was currently looking at the introduction of groupings of academic departments for sharing good practice and resources, but without compromising the academic disciplinary integrity of individual departments. Discussion would be held with Academic Board and with the Warden's Advisory Group in the near future.

## **5. FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES**

### **5.1 OVERVIEW AND HEFCE AND TDA FUNDING; IMPLICATIONS FOR GOLDSMITHS**

It was reported that the contents of letters from BIS and HEFCE had been shared with members of the College. The Registrar and Secretary advised that HEFCE funding for 2011/12 was to be cut (as was expected following the Browne Review). It was anticipated to be a reduction of £1.3 million less funding than the previous year.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that all Heads of Departments had been asked to work with the Finance Department to identify six per cent reductions to their budgets. He assured colleagues that any proposals that affected staff numbers or working patterns would be discussed with Unions.

The Registrar and Secretary also advised that there would be changes to the TDA funding in 2011/12 and the delivery of teacher training throughout the country. These changes would particularly affect the Departments of Design and of Education. He advised that open meetings were being held with staff in those departments to establish whether they had any particular views on strategies to respond to the changes.

UCU noted that the withdrawal of bursaries for those who studying education-related courses would inevitably impact upon student recruitment as the nature of the courses was such that there was no scope for students to undertake paid employment. The Registrar and Secretary responded that this was an issue that the College would need to look at.

UCU noted that cuts to HEFCE and TDA funding, an increase to NI contributions, and a request for 6 per cent budget reductions would all come in one year. They felt this was very challenging and looked forward to being kept informed of progress throughout the year.

- **Tuition Fees and Access Agreement**

UCU asked when it was likely that tuition fees for 2012 would be set. The Registrar and Secretary responded that it was likely to be in April 2011, but advised that access agreement deadlines were not yet known; before tuition fees could be set there was substantial research work to be undertaken.

## 5.2 Staff Cost Reduction Programme

The Director of Human Resources advised that it had been hoped that the Staff Cost Reduction Programme would result in £2.5 million being cut from the College's pay bill, however that the actual reduction had been £1.3 million. This was the equivalent of 12 full-time posts having been cut from the establishment (stemming from 43 approved applications). The exercise had meant that creativity had been required with regard to how work was organized so that remaining staff were not negatively impacted.

The Director of Human Resources advised that there had not been strong take up of flexible working and additional annual leave purchase.

UCU noted the difference between the number of successful applications made by ethnic minorities compared to others. The Director of Human Resources advised that this was an issue being investigated by the College's Equalities and Diversity Advisor in order to establish whether there were any underlying issues that the College needed to be aware of. The Registrar and Secretary agreed that this was important. UNISON asked whether it was possible for a qualitative assessment of the applications to be undertaken, for example conducting interviews with both those who made successful and unsuccessful applications. The Director of Human Resources responded that such an assessment was something which the College's Equalities and Diversity Advisor would be able to consider, but noted that as the number of applicants was not great, it might be difficult to see a meaningful pattern. He added that if either UCU or UNISON had any feedback from its members which it was felt might be useful to the Equalities and Diversity Advisor this could be passed on.

UCU asked whether the College was looking at the impact of the Voluntary Severance Scheme had had on those staff still with the College. The Director of Human Resources confirmed that it was, and noted that it had been necessary for there to have been a sound business case in place which made clear that an approved application would not be to the detriment of other staff. UCU commented that they were concerned about work-load issues that might not show themselves immediately, but in the future. The Director of Human Resources stated that he was conscious that staff should not have excessive workloads and that the College needed to find ways of working 'smarter.' UNISON stated that it was important that so as to ensure 'smarter' ways of working, the College's training budget would not be subject to significant cuts, and that training should be available to employees at all grades. The Registrar and Secretary responded that all budgets would be carefully reviewed. The Director of Human Resources added that it was important to ensure that any training provided by the College was relevant and effective.

UCU and UNISON expressed concern about whether the Voluntary Severance Scheme had been applied consistently. The Director of Human Resources responded that he was unable to comment on individual cases. He understood that concerns raised in no case had already been addressed and he was content to copy the letter to the Full time Officer to local representatives if they so wished.

*Mr John Wadsworth and Ms Ruth Levin left the meeting.*

## **6. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

### **6.1 COMPLETION OF THE PAY ROUND**

The Director of Human Resources advised that the College had written to all employees on 28 January to confirm the most recent pay award. He noted that UCU had not been in agreement with it. He added that payments (including back-pay) had been credited to employee's salaries in February 2011.

### **6.2 PROGRESS OF 2011 PAY ROUND**

The Director of Human Resources advised that the College would confirm to Trades Union colleagues whether it would be participating in National Pay Negotiations after the decision was made in April 2011. He added that the College was not minded to withdraw from them, but wished to see proposals from UCEA before formally committing.

### **6.3 UCU BALLOTS FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

The Director of Human Resources stated that it was his assumption that UCU would write to the College if industrial action was to be taken.

The Director of Human Resources expressed concern regarding the recent ballot over strike action. He stated that there appeared to be a discrepancy between the number of members of the union advised to the college and the number of ballot papers issued, and that he would like clarification. He noted that only 28 per cent of those entitled to vote voted that they would take strike action and that the college was disappointed that members had nevertheless been called out on strike.

UCU asked whether the College wished to comment upon the fact that Goldsmiths had the highest percentage of votes in favour of strike action out of all Higher Education institutions. The Director replied that the response level to the ballot was actually quite low in Goldsmiths at less than 35% of membership and much lower than in many other HEIs, and that percentage in favour needed to be seen in that context. Nevertheless, it was of course perfectly understandable that individuals were concerned about possible changes to pension schemes and low pay increases; but the college questioned whether strike action was an appropriate response in any event and in particular to the challenges facing Goldsmiths at this time.

UCU commented that they were disappointed that they felt a recent GC Info had encouraged non-UCU members to discourage UCU members from voting in favour of strike action; especially as UCU were not able to use GC Info as a method of communication themselves. The Director of Human Resources responded that he was surprised that UCU were disappointed that the college should do all it could to discourage staff from taking strike action which could only damage it. In terms of communication, the college believed it provided under the recognition agreement sufficient facilities for Trades Unions to contact, lobby and meet members.

### **6.4 USS PENSION SCHEME CHANGE PROPOSALS: PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Director of Human Resources advised that the JINCHES meeting scheduled to take place the previous day had been postponed. He advised that the proposed modifications

to the pension scheme would now be discussed on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011. He explained that he understood that two of the main points for discussion would be what the period between someone leaving and being able to rejoin the scheme should be, and the length of the period during which someone could transfer from one scheme to another. UNISON noted their concern that some individuals may be left with little option than to transfer into a pension scheme which was less favourable than that which they were currently in.

UNISON asked what the impact on the College would be if employees withdrew from the pension schemes. The Director of Human Resources responded that this would not be problematic for the College, but that it would be for the pension providers. The Registrar and Secretary stated that he would recommend that any individual considering withdrawing from their pension scheme consult an independent financial adviser.

## 7. POLICIES AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Director of Human Resources stated that the **Promotion and Progression** round for 2011 had been launched, and that 56 applications had been received and sent to Heads of Departments thus far. He noted that the majority of applications had been for progression from Lecturer B to Senior Lecturer. He also noted that the launch had taken place two months earlier than it had the previous year and that he hoped that it would be launched a month earlier again the following year.

Union colleagues stated that, with regard to support staff, the subject of **creating job families** should be one of the College's priorities, and that they were concerned by the lack of progress that had been made in this area. The Director of Human Resources agreed that the creation of job families was important, and that, as soon as the necessary resources within the Human Resources Department were available (which was unlikely to be before June 2011), progress would be made. He noted that he was in discussion with the Senior Management Team about the matter. The Registrar and Secretary stated that it was important that there was a way for support staff to progress their careers at the College.

UCU stated that there had been a lack of progress with regard to **hourly paid staff** and the nature of their contracts of employment. They added that one of the impacts of this was that departments were finding financial planning difficult. The Registrar and Secretary agreed that progress had not been as fast as had been hoped and that it was important to move forward with ensuring that hourly paid staff had appropriate contracts.

The Director of Human Resources noted that the **Wellbeing and Sickness Absence Management Policy, the Job Protection and Redundancy Policy and the Regrading Policy** were all at the first draft stage and would shortly be shared with the HR Committee and the College's Senior Management Team. He advised that he hoped to be able to begin consultation with the Trade Unions in the latter half of April.

UCU advised that it had been brought to their attention by two departments that there was not always equality of opportunity where recruitment for **internal job vacancies / secondment opportunities** was concerned. They asked whether a policy related to this matter should be drawn-up. UNISON noted concern around some employees not having access to the internet and thus to information about internal job vacancies / secondment opportunities.

UCU advised that it had brought to their attention that an **anonymous complaint** had been made, by a student, about a member of staff. The Registrar and Secretary recognised that one of the difficulties with handling anonymous complaints was that if they were made maliciously there would be no opportunity to seek redress on the individuals who had made them. He stated that such complaints should be looked at on a case-by-case basis before a decision was taken as to whether they should be investigated. UCU suggested that a College policy regarding anonymous complaints would be useful.

The Director of Human Resources commented that a blanket response that no anonymous complaints would be investigated could mean that some serious matters were left unaddressed if individuals were scared of putting their name to a complaint. The Pro-Warden (Students and Learning Development) concurred, stating that he was aware of students who had been fearful that if they made a complaint they would be victimised.

UCU responded that they felt sure that the College could take steps to protect students who felt this way. The Registrar and Secretary agreed to look into the matter and noted that in doing so it would be useful to get the Student Union's input.

UNISON expressed concern that although a **disruption to travel policy had been agreed** following consultation with the trade unions it seemed to have been disregarded in December 2010.

UNISON noted the nature of the roles undertaken by many of their members was such that they were unable to work from home, and they felt the approach taken by the College when there was disruption to travel left them in a less favourable position than those staff who could work from home. They also noted concern over the ramifications for parents who could not attend work due their children's school being closed. The Director of Human Resources responded that, unless the College is closed, it was unrealistic to expect it to pay those who are unable to attend work. UNISON stated that they wished to discuss this matter further. The Director of Human Resources stated that it might be possible for any deduction to salary where staff had been unable to attend work to be spread over a greater period of time than it currently is. UNISON suggested that a staff survey on the matter might be useful.

## **9. MANAGEMENT AND TRADE UNIONS JOINT MEETINGS**

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that monthly meetings between the Human Resources Department and the Trade Unions had been scheduled. It was noted that they did not constitute a substitute for JNCC meetings.

## **10. NEXT MEETING**

11 May 2011