

**GOLDSMITHS  
University of London**

**COUNCIL**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2011**

- Present:** Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Ms Lyn Downey, Mr Hugh Jones, Dr Basem El-Haddadeh, Professor Richard Grayson, Dr Andrea Gilroy, Professor Frank Bond, Ms Alison Ahern, Ms Mary Stacey
- Apologies:** Dr Frances Pine, Ms Rachel Soper, Mr Gerald Lidstone
- In attendance:** Miss Fatma Gormus (Secretary), Ms Marcia Williams (for item 7) Ms Bernadette Barnes (for item 13) Ms Gloria Youri

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1 MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2011 be approved.

**2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

The Chair asked whether the sickness policy would alter the way absence would be recorded going forward.

The Interim Director of HR reported that HR and the Trade Unions had currently been consulting on the new sickness policy. It was envisaged that the first draft of the policy would be ready by December 2011. It was also reported that the intention would be to put the draft out to the Policy Implementation Network (PIN) group for them to comment on the practicality and usability of the policy.

The interim Director of HR also reported that part of the policy would reference in Goldsmiths form of absence reporting as there had been inconsistencies of practice across the departments to date. A new process is being developed as part of a Pyramid HR/Finance project.

The Chair asked whether there would be any structural problems which might affect the quality of accuracy of data.

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) reported that dependent on the accuracy and quality of data received from departments, this could be monitored on a regular basis.

Members discussed the culture of the College and the differences between recording sickness for academic staff and support staff. Academic staff who worked various hours and patterns of work to a greater degree than support functions and consequently reporting of sickness absence for academics had been a long standing issue. As academic staff and support staff often work from home whilst they are sick it could be difficult to challenge them on reporting their absence at the present time as their presence is only essential to an extent as to when they are required to teach. If they were to be absent on a teaching day, they would normally arrange cover for their classes or contact staff via VLE, reporting their absences locally.

The Chair commented that the different working arrangements would tend to highlight that the support staff absences were more obvious as they would not be present in the office and consequently easier to record than for academic staff.

The Interim Director of HR reported that HR are currently working on a project which would take into account ways and patterns of working. She reported that people, who work whilst off sick, would still need to be recorded as sickness absence in order to illustrate and analyse patterns of sickness absences. In addition, the intention of the project would be to e-systemise the process in order to help ensure self-recording of sickness absence and to manage the staff cost of sickness and identify patterns of frequency of sickness absence. It was anticipated that the project would run until the end of the academic year and in the interim there would be a draft sickness policy developed in the Spring term.

The Committee queried the progress on self-service and enquired on the status of this project.

The Interim Director of HR reported that there had been a number of reasons as to why we had not yet been able to launch self-service. She also reported that this project would soon be piloted in some departments.

The Chair referred to Minute number 7 (Staff Development) and explained there had been a requirement for some future work to be undertaken around the analysis of the PDR process and its effectiveness.

The Interim Director of HR explained that a report would have been presented at HRC but due to the departure of the Head of Staff Development, it had not been possible and therefore the Staff Development Manager would be working on this for a future HRC, intended now for the summer term due to the need for a detailed discussion of the PDR policy and process commencing with SMT and a range of managers and staff across the college regarding effectiveness of current PDRs.

The Chair noted and agreed the timescale.

### **3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY**

**Received:**

The Conflict of Interest policy (11-308)

#### **4 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS**

**Received:**

The Standing Orders in force for 2011-2012 (11-307)

#### **5 TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP**

**Received:**

The Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership in force for 2011-2012 (11-422)

The Interim Director of HR reported that it would be helpful for the College to consider the link between the Equality and Diversity Committee and the HR Committee in order to enable the considerations of the E&D Committee into the Colleges' ethos and practice.

#### **6 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**Received:**

The Annual Report to Council (11-426). The committee agreed the content of the report.

#### **7 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

**Received:**

Equalities and Diversity Agenda for 2011-2012 (11-402).

The Interim Equality and Diversity Advisor explained that her paper highlighted the activities which she would be focusing on during this academic year. Her focus had been primarily on compliance and monitoring issues.

The committee asked what the objectives of Equality and Diversity were last year and what these would be in this year. They explained that this would be the expectation of the committee.

The Interim Equality and Diversity Advisor explained that this paper had solely focused on key activities to be taken forward this academic year. She explained that there would be a requirement to review the Equality Schemes in order to finalise our objectives.

The Chair asked whether we had access to data regarding the E&D profile and composition of the workforce.

The Interim Equality and Diversity Advisor explained that there had been recent improvements in the recording of up to date information on gender, age and ethnicity. However, the data on disability appeared to be incorrect. She also advised that her plan would be to work with the WFI Manager to be more explicit on the equality data recording and monitoring data to inform decision making.

In the light of this comment, members agreed that having data is important as without this it would be impossible to analyse, action and resolve the key areas to address in the College E&D practices.

The Interim Director of HR added that although a breakdown of equality and diversity data is what the College needed, there had however been little or no resource to take this workforce management project forward. However this was now a key priority both for HR staffing and student data.

The Chair commented that this would need to be progressed promptly due to the importance of this to support the E&D agenda and the contribution such data and analysis could improve understanding of the College profile and consequent change in culture.

The Chair asked how the College had planned to make sure that equality and diversity would be embedded into the management of PDR's, managing people, managing each individual's accountabilities and further cascading down to others.

The Interim Equality and Diversity Advisor reported that the challenge with equality and diversity would be to make the connection with what people do.

## **8 HR SERVICES**

The report had been requested by the Chair and the Registrar and Secretary to ascertain the current status of HR Services to its users across the College and the assessment of the HR services by HODs and a range of its key users. The Chair requested the Interim Director Human Resources to take the Committee through the main points of the report and to highlight and identify the key priorities identified by Hods and management and other stakeholders.

The report identified issues relating to policies, procedures, speediness and flexibility, clarity of advice and more intensive business partnering.

In summary, six key priorities had been identified through these discussions, which HODs and management wished to see progressed quickly.

- i) Core policies and procedures supported with template documents, easily accessible and flowcharts of who, HR or Depts, are responsible for each part of the process and respective accountabilities.
- ii) Production of regular, accurate and useful WFI both corporate and Dept data sets and comparative data and benchmarking e.g. staff absence and related costs.
- iii) More intense and consistent support from HR in managing under performance and behaviours and handling difficult cases. HODs in the HR Committee reiterated the need for this.
- iv) Focussed and specific short session training for Hods and managers in HR Kitbag of Skills and managing staff per se.
- v) VT Assimilation onto the Pay Framework pay scales was a priority as it was left unaddressed for over two years and caused pay problems given the high % of VTs employed to deliver a range of courses and degree level components of teaching and research causing comparability issues.
- vi) Review of current staff development to ascertain whether fit for purpose and a more cohesive framework developed to nurture and reward talent.

The Chair thanked the IDHR for her thorough analysis and invited all members of the HR Committee to forward their observations and views on these priorities identified by HODs and other managers and users of the services. These observations to be with the IDHR by the end November 2011 and the IDHR to draft a report on next steps to progress this agenda.

## **9 GOLDSMITHS 2015**

### **Received:**

the Goldsmiths 2015 paper (11-423).

The Interim Director of HR introduced the paper and reported that the four areas of the paper identified strategic and practical work streams designed to take Goldsmiths forward in a positive way with the intention of addressing both practical solutions to blockages and problems in current processes and longer term to shape the changing culture. She added that that the project would require intensive HR support, specifically, under the simplification workstream, where creating and simplifying procedures and processes had been highlighted for service delivery. She also added that Ellen Tsang – Senior HRBP (Casework) would be involved with the Communications and Engagement work stream. Ellen would work on the project for half a day a week up until February 2012. Following this she would be released on her current part time contract (0.6fte), from HR, to focus on this G2015 project.

The Director of Finance added that G2015 was a wide ranging programme with the aim to getting a lot of staff involved at different points in the process over the next three years. A website had been set up so that it enabled staff to leave ideas and comments on potential areas for improvement and gave the project team opportunities to capture these ideas from everyone across the College. She further reported that there had been a wide membership and involvement for the work streams.

Regarding the VT/AT Assimilation the Interim Director of HR reported that there had been long outstanding issues with VT/Arts and as part of the HERA work in 2008. The VT/AT project which had been part of the pay framework agreement had not yet been resolved. Another factor to be considered within this project would be to analyse how many VT/ATs would move to fractional contracts and the % still required to be employed on VT contracts.

The Chair asked whether the G2015 Project Director had been comfortable and confident with the way the work streams to date had been managed to deliver and achieve objectives.

The Director of Finance reported that she had been reasonably confident with the structure and had been involved with communicating with the work stream leaders. She added that a buy-out in time would be required in order to get the work stream groups to complete tasks. She further reported that as different people had different capacities and level of time and commitment to give to the project, flexibility would be required across the project team, and therefore a buy-out in time may need to be considered in liaison with the work stream leaders.

The Registrar and Secretary reported that each work stream group had a sponsor from the SMT.

The Chair asked how equality and diversity would be handled within this change project and recommended reviewing the project in the light of equality and diversity considerations would add further value to the project in the long term.

## **10 OPERATIONAL PROGRESS**

### **Received:**

HR Policies status report (11-428)

The Interim Director of HR introduced her paper and explained that the paper had been set out in a traffic light system to illustrate the number of key policies, which had to be finalised and implemented in the next two to three months.

The IDHR further reported that some of the policies (those in amber) required updating for legislation purposes and did not require the need to go to the Unions for consultation. She also reported that part of the problem with regards to not having established policies had been based on the complexity of the ordinances and the length of the approval process. The lengthy time scales established by the Statute 16 meant that Grade 6 and above academic members of staff were being given additional periods of time which consequently added an additional period up to 28 days at each stage of the policies. Due to this lengthy requirement some of the case work which the College was still trying to resolve had been ongoing for 2 + years.

The Committee members were in agreement that the 4 key areas which HR would need to focus on were; Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Change Management Policy and Sickness Policy as a priority. .

It was also noted that the Health and Well-being policy should be perceived as good practice.

### **Received:**

Policy Implementation Process (11-427)

The Chair asked whether there could be another approach with regards to consultation to make the process quicker and more efficient.

The Interim Director of HR reported that she appreciated that the current process might appear lengthy, and due to this, some of the draft policies had become blocked in the process for different reasons. She reported that there had been a need to consult with all of the groups indicated in the PINS process to ensure full and thorough consultation with managers, staff and unions. It was intended that HR would undertake the majority of the preparatory work before taking it through consultation with the parties in the Policy Implementation Process over the forthcoming months.

The Registrar and Sectary reported that the idea of the Pins process would be beneficial, as this would give us clarity on what we want to achieve with the policy and would portray that we are engaging with our users.

It was noted that the flowchart on the PINS process was well received. . However there had been a request from the committee members that a definitive timetable with indicative dates would add more value to the flowchart.

**Received:**

Key Casework Status Report (11-424)

The Interim Director of HR introduced the paper and reported that the table illustrated that HR are currently dealing with a range of issues (just under 80 cases) some of which are new and some of which are ongoing. The IDHR reported that this demonstrated a significant increase in casework and related advice, and in business partnering especially where HR were involved with cases of underperformance.

It was also reported that there had been a similar significant increase number of Recruitment and Selection requests to fill posts and without a full operating I-grasp system this had been challenging to the R&S Co coordinators to deal with the increased workload.

With regards to Job evaluation, there had been an increase in workload there also, with a new round of re grading cases, which have required assistance and appeals. All in all, casework in all HR areas had almost tripled.

The Chair agreed that there had been a notable significant increase in the amount of work for the HR Services. He reported that the number of cases demonstrated the direct result of the consequences of how managers were now addressing long standing issues within their departments.

The Interim Director of HR added that the ramifications of Statute 16 had added to increased timescales which resulted in generating more work, especially where decisions on dismissal and redundancy etc had to be referred to Council level decision making.

Members also discussed the possibility of having a group to deal with specific Statute 16 cases alone. However it was felt that, as the process is very time consuming and can be over complicated this would not assist with the overall transactional work of HR.

It was also recognised that the roles of the Head of Department in such cases required them to become thoroughly familiar with the stat 16 process, which, initially, was very time consuming. It was felt by the committee members that a requirement had been identified regarding role clarity in dealing with cases, which involved the Statute 16. This would enable both HR and the Head of Departments to recognise what their responsibilities would be during the process in future cases.

The Registrar and Secretary reported that there had been an acknowledgement to review the workload of HR, which would include the complexity of cases, and recognise how HR would be required to support departments during different initiatives within Depts. He also added that cases would need to be resolved quicker in order to support the College in becoming more efficient. He reported that there had to be a legitimate balance for HR and departments working well together and that the current problem could be that the College had been unclear about both, and what it actually wants the HRBP role to do.

The Chair asked whether there had been a mechanism that helped unblock these issues and satisfy the employer and employee.

The Interim Director of HR reported that HR staff intended to become more of a proactive service, which could be gained through clarity regarding the HRBP role, consistency and collaborative working with departments.

Members of the committee agreed that the speed of the casework could also depend on the state of the College, employee relations, as continued good relationships with the unions could help towards resolving casework more efficiently and effectively.

**Resolved:**

(i) That a timetable indicating timescales of each stage of the flowchart be prepared for each core policy used by managers.

(ii) That a paper is prepared to confirm role clarity of HRBPs and Head of Departments when dealing with casework for consideration by SMT.

## **11 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT**

**Received:**

a report from IOM (11-425)

## **12 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

The Registrar and Secretary reported that SMT had been addressing the Pro/Warden and Head of Department role clarity and accountability which would involve getting clarity on areas such as succession planning, roles of the Business Managers in the departments and whether or not these roles should have dotted professional lines to HR and Finance. He reported that engagement is paramount and a system to share processes within departments would be valuable, as this would enable Head of Departments to deal with data sets and discussions.

He further reported that each Pro-Warden had been managing an academic department with the purpose of meeting and working together on a shared problem basis to cement roles and to share effective line managements practices.

He also added that shaping the Pro-wardens role had been a priority, as this would confirm how they are required to take their roles forward.

The Chair asked whether there had been a view that the relationships between management and Pro-wardens would have an impact on Goldsmiths 2015.

The Registrar and Secretary reported that the work streams would be covering these points.

The Academic Committee members discussed the possibilities of having a previous Head of Department of mentoring and guiding incoming Heads perhaps as a deputy role. However, after discussion some committee members considered that this could be

disruptive and might block fresh ideas and energy from entering the department. They discussed that strengthening the support and handover would be more valuable.

The Chair reported that HR could assist with organising training and support for new Head of Departments to better equip them for when they take over.

In regards to the Senior Leadership Programme, the Registrar and Secretary reported that Steve Collins had put the proposal together before his departure from the College and that this was being discussed at SMT.

In regards to the Staff Development Programme it was noted that the usual programmes were still ongoing and that there was a need to further discuss which programmes were effective and should be continued, and those which needed further investment.

### **13 WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT**

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) reported that currently work was due to commence to produce new data by the end of November and data cleansing and pilot of new data in Spring term. The Pyramid Self-Service would also be piloted next month whilst HR and Finance had already been using the system.

It was noted that the HR Manager (Systems and Support) would find it useful if feedback was given on what departments would find useful in data reports and trends in the WFI data sets and what HR could do to make the access to WFI and related processes simpler. Consultations with managers on data reports required would commence early next year. She also reported that Phase 2 of the I-grasp project was now underway and it was intended that this was completed by end of this year.

### **14 KEY OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

The Interim Director of HR reported that Unison and UCU had already balloted to strike on 30 November 2011 and that she would be providing guidance to SMT on how to tackle actions short of strike. The guidance paper would also offer clarification for staff with a FAQs fact sheet as well as for managers.

### **15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None recorded.

### **16 NEXT MEETING**

#### **Noted:**

that the next meeting of HR Committee would take place on 6 March 2011.

Fatma Gormus  
HR Business Partner  
November 2011