

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2012

Present: Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Ms Ellen Tsang, Miss Catherine Swarbrick, Dr Basem El-Haddadeh, Dr Andrea Gilroy, Ms Rachel Soper, Ms Mary Stacey, Miss Sally Townsend

Apologies: Dr Frances Pine, Professor Richard Grayson, Professor Frank Bond, Mr Gerald Lidstone, Ms Vicky Annand

In attendance: Miss Fatma Gormus (Secretary), Ms Julliett Fearon-Knott (for item 9) Ms Bernadette Barnes (for item 6), Ms Rody Bristow-Jones (for item 12)

OPEN BUSINESS

1 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2011 be approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee queried the progress of i-Grasp and its current status in relation to the phases of the project as it had appeared that the project was now in its third year.

The Systems and Information Manager reported that as the team had now expanded due to a new appointment of the Systems and Information Officer, it was envisaged that the project could now be progressed. The Systems Support Officer would be working closely with Stepstone (the provider for i-Grasp) to build the system in preparation for Phase 2. In addition to this the Systems and Information Manager had been working with the Recruitment Co-ordinators to help clear fields which contained unused information. It was envisaged that branching and screening questions would be adopted as part of Phase 2.

The Academic Promotions and Progression sub-committees' processes had taken priority over Phase 2 and now that some of the meetings had taken place, the Systems Team could back and re-focus on Phase 2. The Interim

Director of HR also reported that i-Grasp would also incorporate Promotion and Progression for on-line applications in the future.

The Committee supported the use of i-Grasp for Promotions and Progression as this had been tested previously within the Department of PACE.

The Chair asked whether HR needed technical support from IT Services.

The Systems and Support Manager reported that the project was more of an internal process with assistance from Stepstone, which managed i-Grasp remotely.

The Chair reported that as there had been a shift in priorities, the focus would need to be regained in relation to the goals HR is aiming to achieve.

3 GOLDSMITHS STUDENT APPLICATIONS

The Director of Finance reported that applications for Home/EU/Undergraduate and international students had been looking positive with applications rising in comparison to previous years. She added that the current figures looked achievable. It was also reported that the Home/EU applications had been monitored on a weekly basis with figures being represented at WAG and SMT.

The Director of Finance reported that overall the Colleges target seemed achievable and that they felt confident with the current figures.

4 HR STATUS REPORT

Received:

an update on feedback, key priorities and the next steps (12-264)

The Interim Director of HR reported that she had been getting to grips with the team's work programmes and that one of the most recent positives had been the funding for a number of temporary posts to assist with some of the outstanding projects. A Human Resources Business Partner had been appointed to deal with some of the long outstanding Statute 16 cases who also had responsibility for supporting PACE 3 days a week through their recent restructuring project. A Visiting Tutor Project Manager had been appointed for the Visiting Tutor Project and a Human Resources Business Partner (Policies and Practice) had been appointed to conclude some of the important policies which had been outstanding.

More work had been carried out with regard to G2015 and the roll out of some of the initiatives had begun.

The Committee were pleased to hear about one of the new key processes – The Staff Starter Process, which would become a simplified process involving Human Resources/Finance and IT in ensuring that a new member of staff joining will have the essentials set up for them before they join the College. It

was agreed by all members that this would help with giving the College a positive image.

The Committee also raised a point regarding student equality and diversity data and reported that whilst Human Resources had systems to collect the 9 characteristics of Equality and Diversity data, this still needed discussion on the student side.

5 WORKFORCE INFORMATION

Received:

an update on Goldsmiths Staffing Profile and E&D profile (12-257)

The Systems and Support Manager provided a report of Equality and Diversity data and explained that further work had been required on HESA. It was also reported that work had been carried out with Payroll to report on monthly absences, work permits, probation, and staff movements.

The Chair asked how these reports had been integral to the departments needs and what the long term view would be in relation to the data being produced.

The Interim Director of HR reported that the current data had already been taken to the Equality and Diversity Committee and previously, to the Academic Board. In HR the reports had been discussed within the departmental management team (DMT) with the view that the reports would be the Human Resources Business Partner's responsibility to be taken forward at their departmental meetings with Head of Departments.

The Chair reported that a reporting strategy was required at a high level to meet the needs of the clients. His view was that HR was key to resourcing in the College but the question remained how these reports could be utilised in order to fit the departments' business plans. The reports would need to be fully analysed in order to deliver the business need which would take into consideration leavers, budgets, training needs and management. He added that process would need to be robust so that it could be maintained throughout the College. He asked the Director of IT, Interim Director of HR, and the Registrar and Secretary to discuss this further outside the Committee.

The Committee discussed the requirements of the data being produced and agreed that it was important to establish what the data meant and how useful it would be for each department.

The Registrar and Secretary reported that the information which had been captured had been useful but that it would mean a lot more if the data had been analysed. She agreed that a lot more work had to be completed before discussions with departments could take place. The analysis would take time but without a suite of core information and processes the organisation could find it difficult to develop without it.

The Director of IT reported that a lot of work had been carried out on setting up a framework for the management of systems information across the College. He added that this would be a significant piece of work which could take up to two years to implement.

The Committee discussed ownership in regards to who would be responsible for analysing and manipulating the data.

The Interim Director of HR reported that building up the current Pyramid System and the delivery of high quality, accurate data would allow HR Business Partners to initiate preliminary discussions with Head of Departments.

The Chair reported that the most significant problem was regarding ownership. He explained that HR would provide the information, but it would be SMT's role to provide leadership, to challenge and direct departments to deliver on equality and diversity targets. He added that although it would be demanding it would however be a top level commitment supported by HR to deliver.

Members of the Committee agreed that qualitative data would be important and that the data needed to be cleansed in stages. It was also suggested that the presentation of the data be reviewed as the colour coding could cause confusion.

Resolved:

- (i) that the data on the Pyramid system required on-going cleansing
- (ii) that the colour coding of the data presentation be re-considered for future reports

6 CASEWORK UPDATE

Received:

HR casework report (12-258)

The Interim Director of HR reported that recruitment activity continued to be high and that it was envisaged that further short term recruitment had been anticipated as an outcome of the VT project. This volume of work was proving a challenge to maintain the required service levels within current resources.

The Committee discussed the recruitment activity relating to fixed term appointments and assimilation processes including the VT project. It was agreed that alternative options could be considered in order to simplify processes for short term contracts which would add value.

The Chair reported that as part of a recent panel meeting it came to light that staff in HR had been taking on a function which was more appropriate to that of the Head of Department. HR should have provided a support role for that

purpose. He further said that this approach reinforced unhelpful expectations, that HR would lead and deliver all aspects of casework.

The Committee members agreed that this raised fundamental questions regarding how Head of Departments were inducted into their roles, knowing where the boundaries and responsibilities between managers and HR.

Resolved:

that alternative options would be considered in order to simplify processes for short term contracts which would add value.

7 VISITING TUTOR ASSIMILATION PROJECT UPDATE

Received:

Visiting Tutor update (23-259)

The Director of Finance reported that work had been currently underway and that good progress had been made. The team had been working on collecting data from departments and formulating scenarios. There had been uncertainty around the deadlines of the project and confirmed that it would not be possible at this point to report whether we were within the Visiting Tutor budgeting for the project.

8 HR POLICIES UPDATE

The HR Business Partner (Policy and Practice) reported that she had spent some weeks on fact-finding, developing policies and relationships with colleagues in HR as well as clients outside the department, including the Unions. She explained that some of the policies had already been well developed and some changes in legislation meant that a few of the policies such as the redundancy policy required slight amendments to reflect those changes. The main aim had been to provide managers with detailed guidance and have policies which were compliant with law. It was also reported that internal consultation with the Unions was underway and that the JNCC had agreed that there would be informal meetings with the unions to discuss the policies before they were introduced at any main meetings.

The Chair reported that the Committee should be given authority to agree policies so that when they reached Council, it would only be a matter of Council accepting and formally approving the policies.

The Committee agreed that the developed policy framework should be prescriptive in what needed to be done with appropriate timescales.

Resolved:

that the process be re-visited and comments taken on board for further discussions at the next meeting.

9 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Noted:

a report from IOM (12-260)

10 STAFF COUNSELLING ANNUAL REPORT

Noted:

a report from the Staff Counselling Service (12-261)

11 STAFF DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Staff Development Manager reported that, as a result of staff changes and subsequent vacancies the delivery of the range of programmes set out in the annual work programme had not been possible. Notwithstanding that, there have been a concentration on 'themes' which would be the believed chimes with what the College have been aiming to accomplish. These can then be further refined and developed in line with HR Strategy on the appointment of a permanent Director of HR.

Some key themes which have been recognised are; Performance Management at a strategic level – support from top of organisation / behaviours / organisational citizenship. Head of Department and Senior Manager Development – practical imperatives as well as pragmatic look at realities of the role. 'Onboarding' approach to Staff Induction – looking at points in employee life-cycle beyond just start date. Approach to Learning & Development – this has embedded the concept of responsibility for own development and support with bespoke and off-the-shelf programmes including a competency, behavioural framework (once developed in HR), Organisational Development interventions – Knowledge Café, Open Space, Appreciative Enquiry, Strengths based coaching; developing a 'cadre' of external coaches to support top teams – with Organisational Development approach – share themes (without breaking confidences) to build organisational knowledge and building up our network of internal coaches – who can undertake 'exit' and 'arrival' interviews

12 G2015

Received:

an update on G2015 (12-262)

The Director of Finance reported that portfolio management proposals under the Academic Review work stream had been part of a consultation exercise and were due to be discussed at the Academic Board on 6 June 2012. She explained that it would be very important to gain engagement from the Academics.

The Chair commented that policies could be incorporated in to the simplification work stream of G2015.

13 OLYMPICS PREPARATION UPDATE

Noted:

a report from the Interim Registrar and Secretary (12-263)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chair thanked the Director of IT for his contribution and welcomed Mary Stacey as the new incoming Chair of the Committee from 2012/13.

Mary Stacey thanked the Chair (Ken May) for his great contribution over the last 6 years and for helping to improve the Committee to develop its important role.

NEXT MEETING

Noted:

that the next meeting of HR Committee would take place on 5 November 2012.

Fatma Gormus
HR Business Partner
July 2012