

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

COUNCIL

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
4 March 2013**

Present: Mr Philip Wright (in the Chair), Mr Patrick Loughrey, Ms Mary Stacey, Mr Samsun Osun

In attendance: Mrs Liz Bromley, Mr Andrew Lantry, Professor Simon McVeigh, Professor Jane Powell, Ms Sally Townsend, Dr Michael Young, Mr Chris Lloyd (Secretary).

Apologies: Mr David Richards, Mr Dan Lambeth

OPEN BUSINESS

1 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012 be approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Received:

a list of approved tuition fees for 2013-14 (13-80)

Noted:

that no major service contracts are due to renew in 2013, that Estates capital contracts are overseen by Estates Committee and the capital schedule in the Management Accounts details all significant capital projects.

3 SUMMARY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Received:

the Management Accounts for the period to December 2012 (13-81).

Noted:

- (i) that the first quarter forecast was slightly ahead of budget with work on the second quarter forecast underway which suggested that this would continue;

- (ii) that work was underway through the Agresso and Student Records System Projects to improve real time reporting of tuition fee income, which should improve fee reporting and forecasting in the management accounts from 2013-14;
- (iii) that there was confidence in the budgeted Endowment and Interest received even though there had been a limited amount received in the first quarter as this was considered a phasing issue;
- (iv) that the College had recently engaged a consultant who had given recommendations on fundraising and guidance on developing a fundraising strategy;
- (v) that the IT Strategy was currently considered by the Information Management & Systems Committee but as the committee structure was to be reviewed consideration would be given to reporting this strategy through Finance and Resources Committee;
- (vi) that investment had recently been made into the IT infrastructure which had been focused on improving the student experience and that additional investment was planned for further improvements;
- (vii) that the committee was pleased to note the amount of expenditure budgeted for physical estates work in the management accounts.

Resolved:

- (i) that the report from the fundraising consultancy would be shared at the summer meeting of Council;
- (ii) that as the schedule of IT Services Capital Projects was not included in the management accounts these would be circulated following the meeting;
- (iii) that the IT Strategy would be circulated to the Committee.

4 APPROACH TO BUDGET-SETTING

Received:

a report by the Director of Finance on the process to be undertaken in the preparation of the 2013-14 budget (13-82)

Noted:

- (i) that the Professional Services restructure would be considered when setting the budget, with the Registrar and Secretary having reviewed the quarter 2 forecast and attending the budget meetings to provide a steer for future budget allocations;

- (ii) that HEFEC would continue to operate a student number control for 2013-14 to regulate the overall home/EU undergraduate student population with students with high entry qualifications (ABB+ at A-Level or equivalent) remaining outside each institution's controlled population, enabling institutions to recruit as many of these students as they can and wish to do so, subject to demand;
- (iii) that external competition for students with high entry qualifications would be more fierce for 2013-14 entry following under recruitment amongst the College's competitors in the previous year;
- (iv) that the College was undertaking an Applicant Conversion Project designed to keep applicants engaged with the College and ensure that applications were converted to enrolments;
- (v) that international student recruitment had shown significant increases for the 2013-14 recruitment cycle and the College was not concerned with any significant visa issues related to this.

5 FINANCIAL LIMITS

Received:

a proposal from the Director of Finance to amend the current Financial Limits approved in 2006. (13-83)

Recommended:

that Council approve changes to the Financial Limits outlined in the attached report with an effective date of 1 August 2013.

6 PENSIONS

Received:

a paper from the Director of Finance on the College's pension position (13-84)

Noted:

that the College had been exploring the options for a defined contribution scheme but this would only be available for staff opting out of the LPFA scheme, and so staff on grades 1 – 5.

Resolved:

- (i) that the paper would be shared at Council, subject to any suggested amendments from the Committee;

- (ii) that the College would write to HEFCE, on behalf of the Committee, regarding how pensions liability should be demonstrated in the financial accounts and the implications for institutions due to proposed changes.

7 SALE OF COLLEGE ASSETS

Received:

a paper from the Director of Finance regarding the sale of College assets (13-85)

Resolved:

that 47 Lewisham Way be placed on the market.

8 REVALUATION OF COLLEGE ASSETS

Received:

a paper from the Director of Finance regarding revaluation of the College's Assets and Estate (13-86)

Noted:

that the paper, and the information contained therein, suggested that a cautious approach should be taken to revaluation as this is not a risk-free exercise.

Resolved:

that revaluation would not take place at the current time but that this decision would be reviewed on a regular basis.

9 TRAC RETURN

Resolved:

to approve, for formal report to HEFCE, the TRAC return already submitted by the College by the 31 January 2013 deadline (13-87).

10 ANNUAL REPORT ON COLLEGE COMPANIES

Received:

the Annual Report on College Companies from the Director of Finance (13-88)

11 VISTING TUTOR ASSIMILATION PROJECT

The Committee noted a discussion that had taken place at the previous Human Resources Committee regarding the project to assimilate Visiting Tutors to the Goldsmiths Framework Agreement, a project led by the Human Resources

department with support from the Finance Department.

The assimilation of Hourly Paid Staff – Visiting Tutors (VTs) and Associate Tutors (ATs) - to the Goldsmiths Framework Agreement is a key task in ensuring the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value' within Goldsmiths. It would determine how VTs and ATs are graded and paid in the future, with the project also having analysed how Departments have managed Hourly Paid contracts since 2006. This had involved a significant exercise in data collection around job matching and payment practices across the College (2006 – 2013) to inform the discussions, consultation and the negotiations with the Trade Unions – which at the time of the meeting were on-going.

As work on assimilating VTs to these pay scales commenced in 2006 there would be a significant amount of back pay to reconcile once an agreement had been reached. It was noted, however, that there had been provision made in the financial accounts to offset the historic costs of this with a contingency in the current budget for in-year costs.

Resolved:

- (i) that as it was important to monitor the risk associated with this project an item would be added to the agenda for the summer meeting of the committee on the VT Assimilation Project and potential consequences of the outcomes;
- (ii) that the VT Assimilation Project would be discussed with Academic Heads of Department at an upcoming meeting of the Warden's Advisory Group.

12 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted:

that the date of the summer meeting would need to be amended as the Chair would not be able to attend.

Resolved:

that the Secretary would communicate with Committee members to find an alternative date for the summer meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Exception section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act (commercial interests) expected to apply for 3 years.

13 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Received:

a paper from the Director of Finance regarding Strategic Partnerships. (13-89)

Noted:

- (i) that three separate advisors would be required when considering options for strategic partnerships: legal, real estate and financial;
- (iii) that the Registrar and Secretary brought previous experience in introducing strategic partnerships from her previous role.

Resolved:

- (i) that any agreement would need be a partnership with the College;
- (ii) that the risks of a strategic partnership would be addressed by the Working Group and presented with its recommendations.

Recommended

- i) that the College undertake work to scope and take forward a strategic partnership;
- ii) that the objectives of the strategic partnership be:
 - to contribute to the improvement of the student experience
 - to enhance the capital estate and infrastructure of the college;
- iii) that the College establish a working group to consider strategic partnerships with Council membership composed of the Chair of Finance and Resources Committee and the Chair of Estates Committee.