

**GOLDSMITHS  
University of London**

**COUNCIL**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2013**

**Present:** Ms Mary Stacey (Chair), Ms Kath Clarke, Ms Ellen Tsang, Mrs Liz Bromley, Mr Gerald Lidstone, Dr Andrea Gilroy, Professor Frank Bond, Ms Vicky Annand, Miss Rachel Soper, Miss Sally Townsend, Professor Nick Couldry

**Apologies:** Professor Richard Grayson

**In attendance:** Mrs Fatma Ali (Secretary), Ms Rody Bristow-Jones (for item 10)

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1 MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012 are approved.

**2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

The Chair announced that the HR move to Deptford Town Hall is anticipated to take place by Easter.

**3 HR Vision**

The Director of Human Resources announced that it is a real privilege to be at the College and she thanked the Interim Director of Human Resources for her contribution at this very demanding time. The Director of HR explained that in the eight weeks since being in post, she has already learnt much, having met with 11 Academic Head of Departments, 25 Senior Managers and Heads of Professional Services, as well as the Unions, and has gained a reasonable understanding of the College and the HR team. She explained that there is a great sense of optimism and, although this has been a challenging time for the sector, it will also be an aspirational time for the College. She further added that in order to meet our aspirations for the future, she feels that a change in culture will be required.

She explained that the overall response received from Head of Department's is that they want HR to be a part of their business and therefore she understands that changes in HR must be made in order to meet the needs of the clients.

She acknowledges that the HR department has not had strong leadership, which has made progress very difficult. She explained that her focus will be to move the department forward by understanding what a great HR service looks like. She explained that the aim will be to develop a strategy to help departments find solutions and discover innovative ways of working.

She further explained that as much as the College aims to ensure that students have a quality experience, it is also important that staff experience this and HR will play a vital role. It is important that HR is not seen as the 'policy police' but rather as a service provider, assisting with finding solutions. HR's role is to minimise risk by enabling, providing data for managers to help with decision making. The Business Partners are part of the management team and they need to be trusted.

It was also noted that since her arrival, the Director of HR has listed 26 initiatives and priorities that have started over the last 2-3 years. It is her aim to review these initiatives and group them into important long and short term tasks, as it will be a challenge to complete all 26 initiatives at the same time. It was also noted that in the next 6-8 weeks there will be a 3-year road map to prioritise these activities. This proposed road map will be discussed with the SMT and will also be brought to the Committee to articulate what will be different in 3 years. The road map will take into consideration the HR structure, capabilities and capacity.

It was also noted that conducting a staff survey at the present time will not be beneficial as there needs to be capacity to respond to staff feedback. It was also noted that there needs to be a holistic view regarding Occupational Health and that this is currently being discussed.

In terms of top priorities, the Director of HR explained that her aim is to work with the HR team to improve morale and informed the Committee that a full day diagnostic session is planned for the team in the coming week.

She further explained that there is a strong commitment to complete the most important policies of restructuring, organisational change, health and wellbeing, and disciplinary. The aim is to group policies together to get them approved by Unions and Council in the next few months.

With regards to the VT project, the HR team is clear on the delivery time and confident that this will be met.

With regards to Equality and Diversity, the Committee notes that SMT has approved a full time Grade 8 post with the vision that the role will go beyond compliance and will play a holistic role in the College.

The Committee also recognises the importance of having more data from the Finance/HR system and the Director of HR is optimistic about moving this project forward.

Finally, the Director of HR concluded that although these are just some of the short term goals, she acknowledges that much has to be done and that she is looking forward to the challenges.

The Committee welcomed the Director of HR and thanked her for sharing her vision, particularly her focus of working more closely with departments, grouping policies, becoming more engaged and helping to develop departments. The Committee looks forward to seeing the road map.

#### **4 PROMOTIONS AND SALARY PROGRESSION**

**Received:**

Promotions and Salary Progression update (13-99)

The Head of Operations explained that Promotions and Salary Progression closed a week ago. It was noted that the online system needs to be more user friendly and that staff should have been informed of the reason why the closing time had been midday.

#### **5 VT ASSIMILATION PROJECT UPDATE**

**Received:**

Visiting Tutor (VT) Project update (13-100)

The Head of Operations explained that there had been a productive and positive meeting with the Unions on 1 March, where the back pay multiplier was agreed.

It also came to light that some departmental practices mean that their staff have already been paid a multiplier.

The Head of Operations explained that no one size fits all. There are eight different departments and the cost of back pay has been accumulating as the College continues to negotiate. The aim is to ensure that future agreement is based on best practice. The assimilation process will be conducted for hourly paid staff who have 4+ years service and are working beyond 0.2fte. These staff members will be offered standard contracts. The three factors which will be taken into consideration are: multipliers for those that are being assimilated; grades to be assimilated on to; and the multiplier for VTs going forward.

The Committee noted that as this process has been on-going since 2006, and that back pay is accruing all the while and it is imperative for the issue to be resolved without unnecessary delay.

The Head of Operations explained that the management will present a paper to SMT on 15 March 2013 with the aim of having an agreement by the end of April.

The Committee discussed the rate of the proposed multiplier at 2.0, which some thought too high for their departments, whilst others confirmed that they did not use multipliers. The concern from the Committee is around budgets and whether or not the back pay will have an impact on budgets for the coming year.

The Committee also discussed whether there had been general staff awareness of this project. It has been identified that HR is working with the Unions on a joint statement, which will be communicated in due course.

The Chair concluded that in order for the project to reach closure, the negotiations have to be concluded, the departments have to explain what they do, and there has to be a communication strategy.

## **6 WORKFORCE INFORMATION**

### **Received:**

Workforce Information update (13-103)

The Chair thanked Min Rodriguez-Davies for her contribution and hard work whilst at the College.

The Chair asked whether the data is still a concern.

The Head of Operations explained that HR will still need to check with departments to see if the data held is up to date. It was also noted that the self-service system requires further work.

The Committee also discussed the importance of protective characteristics and benchmarking against other Higher Education Institutes. It is acknowledged that benchmarking can be difficult as there is not a clear reference point where Academic staff come from, as they are often from different labour markets and are recruited globally.

## **7 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES RESTRUCTURE**

The Registrar and Secretary explained that the restructure process is now underway and that she has completed five Director-level job descriptions. These have now gone through the job evaluation process and have been agreed with the Unions.

She further explained that the website has been kept up to date and her open door policy has been utilised by 25 staff members who she has met with to discuss concerns and opportunities. She also explained that on the basis of tasks, the job descriptions have been mapped for those directly affected. The Committee had previously been informed that the intention is to advertise all roles internally. It is anticipated that the internal recruitment will be completed by April and there is confidence that there will be four successful appointments. It is hoped that there will be a cultural shift in focus following the appointments of the Head of Sections.

The Registrar and Secretary further explained that only senior staff are affected at this stage. It had also been mentioned that job descriptions should be based on competencies as this will create more opportunities for staff development.

The Registrar and Secretary also explained how she envisages that the focus for the College will be to move from a learning organisation, offering staff opportunities of shadowing, mentoring, training and learning and development. This will identify opportunities to maximise a circle of learning. The focus of the restructure is to see real changes to our service by building inter-relationships between the professional services so that silos between departments are broken down.

## **8 RETIREMENT PROJECT**

Dr Andrea Gilroy explained that the Retirement Working Party had an interesting meeting where they discussed real life stories amongst those who are retired, those who are semi-retired and those yet to retire. Discussion was had around good and bad experiences and what the College can offer to those who wish to retire. Further discussions have been held with the Payroll and Pensions Manager, Staff Development and the Careers Service. It is hoped that discussions will also be held with the Staff Alumni Association.

The Committee agreed that there is a range of options and different ways of using human capital which could benefit the College, especially the Academic departments, and in particular towards the REF. The concept of the Emeritus title was discussed and agreed that, although this title is only available to Professors and Readers, and offered exclusively, there could be another option offering more inclusivity.

It was agreed that the working party will produce a strategic report which will come to the Committee in due course.

## **10 STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

**Received:**

Staff Development update (13-101)

The Chair thanked the Staff Development Manager for her report.

## **11 CASEWORK**

### **Received:**

Casework update (13-102)

The Director of HR explained that there could be a rise in the number of cases HR has to deal with in the next couple of years as Heads of Departments and line managers place more focus on staff performance.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Noted:

that the next meeting of the Committee will be on Monday 10 June 2013.

Fatma Ali  
HR Business Partner  
March 2013