

Council 118

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2019

Deptford Town Hall room 105.

Present: Ms Dinah Caine (Chair), Mr Ian Borman, Professor Frances Corner, Professor Mark d’Inverno, Mr Ben Fowler, Mr Conrad Heyns, Professor Elisabeth Hill, Dr Rodger Kibble, Mr Joe Leam, Mr Ravi Mahendra, Dr Suhail Malik, Mr Kierin Offlands, Professor David Oswell, Ms Lynn Percy, Dr John Price, Ms Pam Raynor, Dr Theo Zemek.

In attendance: Ms Jeanette Batten, Ms Lauren Corelli, Ms Carol Ford, Ms Vivienne Hurley, Ms Beth Lowe, Ms Mona Mounir, Mr Graham Pett, Mr Ian Pleace, Ms Sally Priddle, Sir David Reddaway (Left 5.40pm), Ms Carol Rue (Left 5.15pm), Ms Helen Watson (Registrar and Secretary).

OPEN BUSINESS

1 Apologies for absence

Noted:

- 1.1 Mr Aaron Porter, Ms Althea Efunshile, Ms Helen MacNamara.
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2 Identification of items for discussion

Noted:

- 2.1 None to note
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3 Terms of reference and composition

Noted:

- 3.1 The terms of reference and composition were noted.

4 Chair's report and action

Received:

- 4.1 An oral report from the Chair of Council

Noted:

- 4.2 Welcome to Professor Frances Corner, the new Warden, Mr Joe Leam, the new Students Union President, and Mr Ravi Mahendra, a Lay Member of Council.
- 4.3 Thanks to Elisabeth Hill for her work over the summer as interim Warden.
- 4.4 Acknowledged the end of the occupation and the work that continues to move forwards against commitments.
- 4.5 Thanks to Ben Wilson for his work as Director of Communications.
- 4.6 Office for Students came into their full regulatory powers on 1st August 2019. This noted an increase in expectation around regulation and governance.
- 4.7 Council would receive an update on governance review in November however intermediate changes had been made to improve papers.
- 4.8 Chair's action had been taken to appoint an interim Head of IMS from 1st September-12th September 2019.

5 Minutes

Received:

- 5.1 1. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting on 27th June 2019.

6 Actions

Received:

6.1 Action tracker with updates on actions

Noted:

6.2 First time action tracker had been presented to Council it demonstrated the intention to track progress and the impact of Council.

6.3 The Student's Union President reported that their survey data would be circulated when finalised.

6.4 That the Art Department would be trialling a mental health, well-being app to improve support to students. This pilot would be evaluated after this academic year and if effective, would be fully implemented when the increased fee came into force in 2020-21.

Action:

6.5 Circulate the Students' Union survey data.

7 Matters arising from the minutes

7.1 No matters were raised.

8 Warden's report

Received:

8.1 A report from the Warden

Noted:

- 8.2 This was the first report from Frances Corner and provided a clearer link to the strategic objectives. Going forward this report would be the key report to Council and provide assurance on impact and risk mitigation across the College.
- 8.3 The report provided updates on key operational areas and the external environment.
- 8.4 The Warden outlined that she was delighted to be at Goldsmiths, it was a great institution and there were many opportunities.
- 8.5 It was a difficult time in higher education and the College needed to come together to address both the external and internal issues. Brexit posed issues and opportunities but it was essential that all EU staff and students felt welcome at Goldsmiths.
- 8.6 There was a shortfall in admissions which would have an impact on budget. The true figures would not be known for a few weeks. Council would be kept abreast of figures.
- 8.7 University UK to looking at racial justice and how universities responded, Goldsmiths would feed into this work.
- 8.8 The College was working with Lewisham Council to support students to register to vote. A wider campaign would be needed to ensure students knew how to engage in voting.
- 8.9 Departments would be informed of the financial position and the expectation to make efficiencies and not immediately fill vacancies. This would not just apply to academic departments. It was important given the deficit budget that all options were reviewed and considered.
- 8.10 It was reported that an ex-Registrar would undertake the review into the occupation. The Students' Union would be asked to be part of the review.
- 8.11 The draft lecture recording policy would be presented to Academic Board on 19th September and it remained voluntary to opt-in, however the College would work hard to ease any fears which gave staff pause at participating.
- 8.12 Members were invited to the Decolonise event being held at Goldsmiths in October.

Action:

- 8.13 Invite Council members to College events going forward.

9 Institutional strategy and KPI report

Received:

- 9.1 a report on activity undertaken in pursuit of the Strategy and against the Delivery Plan (19-13).

Noted:

- 9.2 Council noted the institutional strategy report.

10 NSS results

Received:

- 10.1 NSS results for 2018-19 (19-14)

Noted:

- 10.2 The data was included for information and to provide Council with clarity on how the College would use the data.
- 10.3 It was the highest response rate for the College of 62%. The overall satisfaction increased by 2% against a sector average of 0.7%.
- 10.4 The College remained below the sector average for 24 out of 27 questions.
- 10.5 Academic Departments and Professional Services are reviewing data and identifying the underlying issues and how they will be responded to.

11 Students' Union priority report

Received:

- 11.1 Report on the Students' Union's priorities for 2019-20 (19-15)

Noted:

- 11.2 Council welcomed the new Sabbatical Officers and thanked them for their report.
- 11.3 The Sabbatical Officers invited Council members to visit the Students' Union and see the operation.
- 11.4 The Welfare and Liberation Officer outlined that governance and trust with the College were key issues. There were issues with student representation and voice within the governance structure and decision making. There was a lack of trust between the Students' Union and the management.
- 11.5 There was a lack of understanding of the issues and context of student concerns and ineffective response when these issues were escalated through the committee structure. If student voice and trust were not improved, then further protests and occupations were likely.
- 11.6 The Campaigns and Activities Officer stated that they were grateful for the commitments made in response to GARA, however they were concerned about the progress since the agreement had been made. It was becoming clear that there was insufficient resource in this area and it did not appear to be a priority for Council.
- 11.7 The Students' Union fully supported and campaigned for Justice for Workers, Goldsmiths Housing Action and the challenging of increasing rents.
- 11.8 The Education Officer outlined that student mental health was a significant priority, and that data showed that this was deteriorating critically and a response was urgent. The model is currently not effective and the academic departments are not structured to support or address the mental health of students.
- 11.9 A mental health round table had been arranged to discuss this priority area and identify next steps.
- 11.10 Mental health was an issues for academic and professional service staff across the institution so a response needed to look holistically at all areas.
- 11.11 Council would like to hear more about specific actions that the Students' Union would like to see and implement.
- 11.12 Collaborative spirit needed to be at the foundation of the relationship between the College and the Students' Union.
- 11.13 The NSS Students' Union question response was below the sector average and although the Students' Union upholds a boycott of the NSS, they were responding to a variety of surveys on how the community identified with and engaged with the Students' Union.

Action:

11.14 Arrange a visit for the independent council members to the Students' Union.

12 Action plan in response to occupation demands

Received:

12.1 Action plan outlining the College's commitments and next steps in response to the occupation demands (19-16).

Noted:

12.2 The plan was presented to Council as a result of the impact of the occupation on the institution and operational plans did not routinely come to Council. The plan would be implemented by SMT and Council would receive monitoring reports.

13 Racial justice at Goldsmiths

Received:

13.1 a report on the background and strands within this strategy (19-17).

Noted:

13.2 At the June Council meeting members requested additional information on the work of Dr Nicola Rollock and the strategies for addressing racial justice at Goldsmiths.

13.3 The work spoke to and hears from the commitments made with GARA, however is a broader strategic approach.

14 Framework for maximising student outcomes and role of Academic Board

Received:

14.1 Update on the proposed revised approach towards Academic Board work and assurance reporting (19-18)

Noted:

- 14.2 The framework had been developed to respond to the challenges the College faces and use an evidence based approach to addressing them.
- 14.3 The indicators from data sets do not give all the information and the framework allows better analysis behind the metrics.
- 14.4 The framework would fit into the current governance structure and enable the collation of best practice and evaluation of impact.
- 14.5 The priorities included in the framework align with the existing strategic priorities, and the access and participation plan, and are key metrics in the TEF and league tables.

15 Research and enterprise: forthcoming developments

Received:

- 15.1 a report from the new Director of Research and Enterprise (19-19).

Noted:

- 15.2 There were significant changes in the research funding landscape, the College needed to reposition itself to respond to the changes and maximise opportunities.
- 15.3 A commission was being developed to evaluate Goldsmiths' impact in the local community.

16 Scholarships and bursaries 2020 - 2021

Received:

- 16.1 A revised approach to scholarships and bursaries.

Noted:

- 16.2 The proposal had been discussed at an Extraordinary Finance and Resources Committee meeting and the Committee had approved the proposal for recommendation to Council.
- 16.3 The changes would not reduce the amount the College spent on scholarships and bursaries but would better align the offer to the Access and Participation Plan and provide increased on course support.
- 16.4 Increased philanthropy would be explored to enable the expansion of the offers.

Resolved:

- 16.5 The Scholarship and Bursary package for 2020-21 would be revised in line.

17 Enterprise programme phasing

Received:

- 17.1 A proposal to change the scope of phase 1 of the Enterprise Programme (19-21).

Noted:

- 17.2 The proposal had been reviewed by an extraordinary Finance and Resources Committee meeting. The Committee approved the proposal for recommendation to Council.
- 17.3 The Chair of FRC reported that the committee had understood the rationale for the change in phasing and it would improve access to the building for community use.
- 17.4 The proposal recommended the change in the phasing of the Enterprise Programme, this would bring the lift installation into the first phase.
- 17.5 Council had approved the project, however only the first phase was signed off. The revised approach would require £700,000 of spending to be brought forwards and therefore required Council approval.
- 17.6 The impact the works would have on the community was being continually considered and issues were being dealt with individually and sensitively.

Resolved:

17.7 Council approved the re-phasing of the Enterprise Hub programme.

18 Risk management

Received:

18.1 the Strategic Risk Register (19-22).

19 Internal audit plan 2019 – 2020

Received:

19.1 the Internal Audit Plan 2019-20 (19-23)

20 Governance practise

Received:

20.1 A report on immediate actions to improve governance practice (19-24).

21 Returns – to note

Received:

21.1 Returns made to OfS since the last meeting (19-25).

Noted:

21.2 The College had submitted two reports to the Office for Students, a reportable event in relation to the legal action for Deptford Town Hall and transparency data submission.

22 Annual schedule of business

Received:

- 22.1 Annual schedule for business for committees for 2019-20.

23 Any other business

Noted:

- 23.1 The occupation had been a challenging experience for everyone involved and it impacted on the mental health and well-being of the staff impacted by it and involved in it.
- 23.2 Mental health of all staff and students was a priority and needed to be considered holistically.