

Council

25 March 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

Present: Dinah Caine (Chair), Frances Corner, David Oswell, Elisabeth Hill, David Reddaway, Anna Carlile, Anna Furse, Naomi Thompson, Atau Tanaka, Ben Fowler, Ian Borman, Irene Adeyinka, Pam Raynor, Aaron Porter, Andrew Laurence, Ben Morton-Wright, Susan Dilly, Ravi Mahendra, Lynn Percy, Monika Barnes and Ronke Akerele

In attendance: Sara Bafo, Helen Watson, Nirmal Borkhataria, Matthew Brooks, Stephen Graham, Matthew Craggoe, Michael Banissy and Sally Priddle

Apologies: Lauren Corelli, Oscar Hadwin-Guardiola and Philip Stoltzfus

OPEN BUSINESS

1 Chair's action

Noted:

- 1.1 The Chair had not taken any formal action on behalf of Council since the last meeting.
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2 Minutes

Received:

- 2.1 Minutes from previous meetings.
- 2.1.1 26th November 2020
- 2.1.2 18th December 2020
- 2.1.3 28th January 2021

Noted:

- 2.2 A member of Council expressed concerns about the use of the word misinformation and what it could imply about the intention of messages being shared.
- 2.3 Council agreed that language was important and members had to take responsibility to consider the language used in meetings as well as taking responsibility for challenging inaccuracy when they heard it.
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3 Actions

Received:

- 3.1 Action tracker.

Noted:

- 3.2 Council noted the updates against the actions and that a number of actions had been moved to the summer term to ensure full updates could be provided to Council.
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4 Warden's Report

Received:

- 4.1 Warden's Report.

Noted:

- 4.2 It was reported that the government's changes to higher education funding had significant impact on the College; the loss of London weighting and changes to the definition of high cost courses resulted in a 2 million income reduction. The changes to research funding was also impacting projects. The funding landscape was looking very difficult for the College.
- 4.3 The current recruitment figures did not meet targets; the College's recruitment was down whereas the sector was up. The finance team were cautiously planning with departments.
- 4.4 Heads of Schools had been appointed and the roles intended to support departments and improve cross-department work.
- 4.5 The executive was working with the Goldsmiths Leadership Group to focus on KPIs and risks; ensuring that all leaders within the College were aware of the challenges and making efforts to address them.
- 4.6 The College was continuing its efforts to reduce emissions to meet its target of being carbon neutral by 2025.

- 4.7 The Warden had attended a round table to look at the civic university agreement.
- 4.8 The College was continuing to push back on the USS pensions issue to ensure that the arrangements were affordable and fair.
- 4.9 It was reported that the Warden was developing a process for the development of a new Goldsmiths Strategy which would focus on student experience and outcomes. The development process would be brought to Council in June.
- 4.10 Council agreed that the report was comprehensive and demonstrated the extensive amount of work ongoing alongside managing covid.
- 4.11 Plans were developing to embed civic work across the College and the local area, conversations were ongoing with Racial Justice Board, Students Union, Migration Museum and 999 club. The College was also preparing to support Lewisham as the Borough of Culture in 2022. The work be led by the Pro-Warden Research and monitored by the Civic Working Group.
- 4.12 Council agreed that sharing the executive's risk report with the community was a positive initiative and it would be good to engage colleagues with the challenges and understand how they contribute to mitigations.
- Action:**
- 4.13 Return Strategy development process to Council in June.
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5 Academic Board Report including update on the OfS consumer protection response

Received:

- 5.1 Academic Board report.

Noted:

- 5.2 It was reported that Academic Board had discussed the OfS consumer protection response reported in the confidential section.
- 5.3 The government had asked that higher education institutions to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism; Academic Board agreed to consult with department boards and students to assess the community's feelings towards adopting the definition. The feedback would be collated and considered by Academic Board at its next meeting and the Board would recommend the next steps to Council.

- 5.4 The curriculum review was underway, a series of virtual sessions and workshops had been held and included consideration of the College's values and mission. The College's values needed to underpin the curriculum decisions.
- 5.5 The College's values and strategy had been identified through a consultative process with engagement from across the community. It was important that these were not lost as part of the recovery process.
- 5.6 A question was raised about the drafting of the Academic Board report and how discourse was reported within it. It was reported that the report was a summary of the discussions and decisions of the Board and did not replace the minutes which were a formal record of the meeting. Academic Board was a single entity and needed to act as a collective, debate and discussions was essential but decisions were singular and represented the collective choice of the body.
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6 Alternative Vision Document

Received:

- 6.1 Alternative vision document.

Noted:

- 6.2 It was reported that the document had been created by the Professors Forum, a collective of Professors within the College. It was created in response to concerns about how the recovery plan was being created and implemented and the impact the changes would have on the College in the long term.
- 6.3 It was reported that staff felt criticised and were frustrated with the progress and the impact the changes were having on their daily lives.
- 6.4 The forum felt that a Vision was required to ensure the changes focused on a particular outcome that was underpinned by the College's values.
- 6.5 Staff were concerned that they were not being engaged with as part of the recovery process and change was being done to them. Staff were feeling criticised, academics in particular felt that they were being identified as the reason for the financial challenges.
- 6.6 Concerns were expressed that the document had been created by a sub-set of academic staff who had created a collective outside the College's structures; it could be perceived as elitist.

- 6.7 Concerns were expressed about the document, professional services colleagues felt extremely blamed and targeted by it. People were distressed by the document and the impact it would have on working relationships and their careers.
- 6.8 There were concerns about what the document said about the culture between the academic and professional services community; the language and points made could result in the College getting a reputation as an unpleasant place for Professional Services to work. Everyone recognised the need to improve but the document appeared to be divisive and would impact the College's ability to recruit and retain staff.
- 6.9 Questions were asked about how representative the Professors Forum was, it did not include members of Professional Services or lower level academics. It was reported that the document had not intended to be divisive and it was concerning that Professional Services had had a negative reaction.
- 6.10 It was noted that Professional Services colleagues at all levels had expressed that they felt attacked by the document. The response was not sensationalist and although it may not have been the intention of the document but it was how it landed.
- 6.11 It was reported that the response from Professional Services colleagues was regrettable, it was never the intention of its authors. The document was created because the systems within the College did not work and things did not change.
- 6.12 Concerns were expressed about the language and tone of the debate during this item. It was agreed that Council needed to hear and have sensitivity of the feelings of all members.
- 6.13 It was noted that although the document may have been created in a positive spirit but it had had unintended consequences of how it was received.
- 6.14 It was reported that the document had intended to be grass root representation of what the College could be. Concerns were expressed that sections of the community had been left out of the discussions.
- 6.15 Council agreed that the College needed to have a clear academic vision, however it was felt that the College didn't have to choose one of the three options outlined. The College could seek to do all three of the visions.
- 6.16 It was agreed that the College needed to change and that some of the decisions needed to be made in a short time; respect was essential to making these decisions.
- 6.17 Council agreed it was helpful to have the discussion but it was concerning that there was such division amongst the community.

- 6.18 Council had asked for clarity on the academic vision from Academic Board. It was agreed the vision would be returned Council alongside the strategy development work in June.

Action:

- 6.19 Academic Board to provide clarity on academic vision to Council in June.
- 6.20 Executive to speak to Heads of Department about the alternative vision document and how it was being shared and received.

7 Research Excellence Framework

Received:

- 7.1 Research Excellence Framework update.

Noted:

- 7.2 It was reported that the College had submitted its Research Excellence Framework return. The return demonstrated the amazing work going on across the College. A huge amount of work had been undertaken to complete the return.
- 7.3 The College took a different approach to the collation of the submission this time and it had sharpened the approach. The return was made up of 14 submissions, collated from over 1000 outputs of which 100 were in the form of practice research. The 41 Impact Case Studies represented the diverse ways in which Goldsmiths' research has benefitted the world beyond academia.
- 7.4 In the 14 Environment Statements the College reported on, amongst other things, the £36.5M of external research income spent over the REF period, and the 681 PhDs awarded.
- 7.5 Council agreed it was beneficial to receive an update on the REF and hear about the brilliant work underway at the College.

8 Racial Justice Report

Received:

- 8.1 Racial Justice Report.

Noted:

- 8.2 The College was recruiting three roles to support Goldsmiths' race justice work, a Race Equality Manager, Race equality Charter Coordinator and independent co-chair of the Race Justice Strategy Board.
- 8.3 The Board were looking at developing the College's Race Justice Strategy, the proposed strategic themes were reported as: a diverse curriculum; people supported to stay; a safe student experience; community care and accountability and outreach.
- 8.4 The Board agreed that clear objectives needed to be identified to ensure effective tracking of progress and impact.
- 8.5 Racial justice was an essential part of the curriculum review.
- 8.6 Anti-racism training was only part of the College's response to racial justice. It was noted that Council members had all attended unconscious bias training and it was agreed that members would participate in anti-racism training once agreed.
- 8.7 Council discussed concerns that the attainment gap between black and white students had increased this year.
- Action:**
- 8.8 Schedule anti-racism training for Council members once agreed by the Racial Justice Board.
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9 KPI Report

Received:

- 9.1 KPI Report.

Noted:

- 9.2 The KPI report measured performance against the College's strategy, there were 21 KPIS, 18 of which align to the four Overarching Objectives and a further three which measure financial sustainability.
- 9.3 Comparator data for undergraduate entry tariff had been added, Goldsmiths average tariff remained static at 127, whilst the median tariff for our comparator group has reduced by one point to 129 since 2018/19.
- 9.4 The College had changed its approach to the NSS. There were different pressures facing students this year as there had been limited access to campus. The improvement strategy for NSS focused on establishing greater clarity on what high quality and good value looked like.

- 9.5 The KPIs had been reviewed at the Goldsmiths Leadership Group and they had considered how the KPIs related to the Senior Management Team's risk report. The executive was looking at how the broader community could be engaged with to ensure awareness of the KPIs.
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10 Standing Orders

Received:

- 10.1 Revised standing orders.

Resolved:

- 10.2 Council approved the revised Standing Orders for immediate publication and implementation.
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11 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan monitoring return

Received:

- 11.1 The 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan monitoring return.

Resolved:

- 11.2 Council approved the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan monitoring return for submission to the Office for Students.
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12 Estates and Infrastructure Committee Report

Received:

- 12.1 The Estates and Infrastructure Committee Report.

Noted:

- 12.2 Council noted the report.
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13 External Relations Committee

Received:

- 13.1 The External Relations Committee Report.

Noted:

13.2 Council noted the report.

14 Finance and Resources Committee Report

Received:

14.1 The Finance and Resources Committee Report.

Noted:

14.2 Council noted the report.

15 Health and Safety Committee Report

Received:

15.1 The Health and Safety Committee Report.

Noted:

15.2 Council noted the report.

16 Human Resources and Equalities Committee Report

Received:

16.1 The Human Resources and Equalities Committee Report.

Noted:

16.2 Council noted the report.

17 Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee Report

Received:

17.1 The Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee Report.

Noted:

17.2 Council noted the report.

18 Nominations and Governance Committee Report

Received:

- 18.1 The Nominations and Governance Committee Report.

Noted:

- 18.2 Council noted the report.
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19 Any other business

Noted:

- 19.1 A question was raised about the continuation of the Enterprise Hub, it was reported that the capital works had been paused as agreed by Council and would be brought back to Council in September for consideration. The work that formed part of the Enterprise Hub would continue regardless of the building work.