

## COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting that took place on Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 3:00pm – 6:00pm  
in Room 326 [Professor Stuart Hall Building](#), Goldsmiths

### MEMBERS:

Dinah Caine	Council Member (Chair)
Lynn Percy	Council Member (Deputy Chair)
Irene Adeyinka	Council Member
Ronke Akerele	Council Member
Monika Barnes	Council Member ( <i>via teams</i> )
Stella Beaumont	Council Member
Susan Dilly	Council Member
Aaron Porter	Council Member
Pam Raynor	Council Member
Philip Stoltzfus	Council Member ( <i>via teams</i> )
Henrike Donner	Elected Council Member
Michael Guggenheim	Elected Council Member
Naomi Thompson	Elected Council Member
Victoria Chwa	Ex-Officio Council Member
Frances Corner	Ex-Officio Council Member
David Oswell	Ex-Officio Council Member ( <i>paragraphs 8.7 – 9.2</i> )
Paul Rowlett	Ex-Officio Council Member

### ATTENDEES:

Matt Brooks	Director of Governance and Legal Services
Jilly Court	Secretary to Council and Chief Operating Officer
Anna Carlile	Head of School – PSST
Adam Dinham	Head of School – Culture and Society
Stephen Graham	Head of School – Arts and Humanities
Imran Chughtai	Chief Financial Officer
Clive Hayter	Director of Strategy Planning and Projects
Clare McConnell	Council Member ( <i>observing</i> )
Tom Morgan	Deputy Director of Communications, Marketing and Recruitment
Vivienne Hurley	Director of Research Innovation and Knowledge Exchange
Susan Edwards	Director of People and Organisational Development
Edward Venning	Consultant ( <i>Item 11 only</i> )

### SECRETARIAT:

Laraine Moody	Interim Governance Officer
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### APOLOGIES:

Andrew Laurence	Council Member
Fiona McLaren	Council Member
Ben Morton-Wright	Council Member
Kiran Grewal	Elected Council Member

3:04pm – the meeting started.

	<b>INTRODUCTORY ITEMS</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</b>
1.1.	The Chair opened the meeting welcoming Clare McConnell as a new member of Council who was observing the meeting prior to the start of her term of office in September 2023.
1.2.	Apologies were received from Andrew Laurence, Fiona McLaren, Ben Morton-Wright and Kiran Grewal.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Identification of Items for Discussion</b>
2.1.	There were no items identified for discussion.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Open Minutes of the meeting held 22 June 2023 (Paper A)</b>
3.1.	Council resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023 as a correct record, subject to the following changes: - Paragraph 11.8 – should be amended to read: “Council resolved to approve the Budget for 2023/24 subject to further cost savings being found.”
<b>4.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>
4.1.	The Chair of Council reminded the Director of Strategy Planning and Projects that Council had suggested a Balanced Scorecard be produced to measure and monitor the strategy.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Open Action Tracker (Paper B)</b>
5.1.	Council noted that information around international students had been shared through a link and would complement the paper on the agenda.
5.2.	Council noted the action tracker.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Warden’s Report (Paper C)</b>
6.1.	Council noted that the Warden’s Report highlighted the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Industrial action:</b> there was a further meeting planned between UCEA and UCU on which Goldsmiths had made a statement on the positive steps being made; there was a paper on the agenda giving a more detailed breakdown on the Marking and Assessment Boycott. Goldsmiths would look carefully at further steps at the end of August 2023 in ensuring that all students were able to progress appropriately.</li><li>• <b>Welcome Week:</b> activity had been included to show Council the importance of the student experience from the beginning.</li><li>• Thanks were given to those departing <b>senior leaders</b> for their contribution to Goldsmiths over their tenure. Goldsmiths looked forward to welcoming the new Pro-Warden Education and Student Experience at the beginning of October 2023.</li><li>• A reminder to Council that there were a number of <b>Degree Shows</b> should they wish to attend them.</li><li>• With respect to the 2018 Augur review and the perception of low-quality courses and associated student number controls, the recommendations had not followed through on restricting minimum entry requirements however it had been stated that the fee for the foundation year would be reduced. Work was already taking place on validating the financial figures in relation to those courses.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>B3 Condition:</b> Council were reminded that this was the Office for Students condition of registration relating to student outcomes, around continuation and completion rates and progression of graduates into work or further study. Over the last month, the graduate outcome survey results (this survey was undertaken by graduates about 15 months of graduation focusing on professional activity and further study) had been integrated to the B3 space and the College would focus on understanding the risks of the intervention by students through the data for the 2022/2023 academic year. The College was above benchmark across the piece in terms of progression. However, of the data subject areas that the government quoted this involved four out of the College's 16 subject areas which had progression indicators below the threshold. Work would continue in these areas with improvement plans put in place at departmental level to ensure movement was in the right direction.</li> </ul> <p>6.2. Council noted that the salary measurement had been removed from the graduate outcome survey. It was also clear that, as similar to the recent computing review, the Office for Students would be reviewing business studies where a number of institutions had been selected as pilot sites in looking at progression under B3 conditions; it was likely that this would continue around what was being termed "low quality courses".</p> <p>6.3. With respect to progression from specific courses with obvious job outcomes, a question was posed as to whether the government had outlined what a student studying in these areas should achieve with such a degree. Council noted that in areas such as education, students gained practical experience and knowledge working through teaching agencies, in order to move to a postgraduate programme; this was not measured as graduate progression. It was agreed that lobbying with groups such as London Providers and London Higher should take place with regard to issues around education and the 15-month timescale which was considered too soon to be looking at progression.</p> <p><b>Action: the Warden to take the conversation regarding progression surrounding education programmes and timescales to London Higher and London Providers for consideration.</b></p> <p>6.4. It was suggested that as the government had not defined action around "rip off courses", the College should not take its eye off the ball around continuation of courses particularly from year 1 to year 2. Council asked whether there were any other areas, against the measures, that were falling below the threshold.</p> <p><b>Action: the Pro Warden (Academic) to provide data to Council regarding courses perceived by the Government to be "rip off" were falling below the threshold against the measures at Goldsmiths.</b></p> <p>6.5. Council noted the Warden's Report.</p>
	<b>Risk Management (Paper D)</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Risk Management Report (Paper D)</b>
7.1.	Council noted that the report for Summer 2023 had not significantly changed but would do so once the Strategy had been finalised.

7.2.	<p>Council noted with some concern that the RAG rating for financial performance was currently amber. It was agreed that following the discussion at the end of the previous Council meeting this should be re-rated as red.</p> <p><b>Action: Director of Governance and Legal Services to re-rate the RAG rating for financial performance.</b></p>
7.3.	<p>Council noted the Risk Management Report.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Student Recruitment 2023/2024 (Paper E)</b>
8.1.	<p>Council noted that current student numbers were currently 399 below target with significant activity in a number of areas. The undergraduate student cohort was currently stable with clearing taking place on 17 August 2023. There had been a significant clearing campaign which aimed to improve the numbers of students in the clearings process. Projections for postgraduate home students had shown an increase in offers made, although offers in this area were reduced year on year so significant work was required taking place through School action plans to understand the full picture. It was noted that applications were currently of lower quality, and there were significant numbers of applications for courses that were already full. Work had taken place on looking at the level of English language (IELTS) and potentially lowering metric criteria, which could give rise to other issues about supporting students whilst on courses at the College.</p>
8.2.	<p>Council noted that in looking at recent data from UCAS the College were roughly in line with national trends, and this could lead to a more competitive clearing process in the future.</p>
8.3.	<p>In response to assurance sought regarding lowering levels of English Council noted that discussions had taken place with the Centre for Academic English on their capacity to support potential need. There would also be interventions such as language buddies, and meetings with the Centre for Academic English, during Welcome Week for incoming students. With respect to lowering grades, there would be some softening of entry criteria, but this would not be significant. Many subjects taught at Goldsmiths were practice-based subjects so there would be audition, portfolio or other elements that were taken into consideration which would ensure that each application could be reviewed on its own merit. The risk to this approach was that offers would take longer to make. It was suggested that a student mentorship programme was put in place to assist overseas students adapting to life at the College.</p>
8.4.	<p>In response to a question regarding the impact on finances should the shortfall in students be 400, Council noted that this would be in the region of a loss of £5 to £5.8m, although the College currently had a £1m contingency. If there were no mitigations, such as late student numbers through clearing, it would be possible to use the application of agency, and the College would, potentially, be in the realms of a covenant breach which could have a number of undesired effects and would enter relatively unknown territory. The Senior Management Team had already begun discussions around short-term activity such as freezing of recruitment for the permanent establishment and agency staff being looked at on a case-by-case basis and further savings plan to find the additional £1.4m savings. In the more medium-term consideration would be given to the coalition or merger of smaller departments, the number of modules and subject areas, revisions of budgets, and a review of current programmes.</p>

8.5.	<p>With respect to student numbers coming through clearing, Council requested an update on the figures noting that change was inevitable up to the start of the academic year. This information should be presented with departmental numbers to see where student numbers were lower.</p> <p><b>Action: the Chief Operating Officer to provide Council with an update on student numbers in early September and present these alongside departmental figures to show where student numbers were low.</b></p>
	<p><i>3:53pm – David Oswell joined the meeting (via teams).</i></p>
8.6.	<p>It was noted that the Senior Management Team had previously been tasked in looking at student recruitment and retention, in terms of the risk register, setting out mitigation factors for the short, medium and long term clearly. An updated risk register would be prepared for the beginning of the academic year.</p>
	<p><i>3:53pm – David Oswell joined the meeting (via teams).</i></p>
8.7.	<p>Council noted the updated and more detailed department level update on new student recruitment forecasts for the 2023/2024 academic year.</p>
	<p><b>Controls and Assurance</b></p>
	<p><b>Academic Controls and Assurance</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Marking and Assessment Boycott (Paper F)</b></p>
9.1.	<p>Council noted that the numbers of students affected continued to change and that alternative options were being explored such as changes to the academic regulations. Despite these interventions there remained a large group that had not been awarded their degree and there were appropriate communications in place for those students.</p>
9.2.	<p>Council asked that a breakdown of interventions that had taken place were circulated and whether any official complaints had been made by external examiners regarding the process and related academic standards.</p> <p><b>Action: the Chief Operating Officer to provide Council with the breakdown of interventions that had been put in place in support of the marking and assessment boycott and the number of official complaints that had been made by external examiners regarding the process and related academic standards.</b></p>
	<p><i>4:00pm – David Oswell left the meeting.</i></p>
9.3.	<p>Council noted that the planned 2023 graduation ceremonies would celebrate the achievements of students, all of whom had been invited to attend, as the College Regulations stated that the award was the degree given by the College rather than the physical act of a graduation. Awards would then be granted after the celebratory ceremonies.</p>
9.4.	<p>Council noted that the Academic Board, who had oversight of Exam Boards, would provide a report that would give Council assurance that quality and standards had been met.</p>
9.5.	<p>Council noted that the Student Union were seeing students who had not yet received their results. This could be for any of a number of different reasons such as outstanding</p>

	<p>applications which should be taken into account. It was noted that the College had a rolling release of results, with the deadline being 21 July 2023, and if a student had a pending appeal, then this would be followed up. Discussions had also been on-going regarding foundation students and extension of visas, and it was agreed that this particular conversation would be taken off-line outside the meeting. It was suggested that this, and other categories of student that were dependent on their grades, were expedited.</p>
9.6.	<p>Concern was raised as to whether the action would continue into the autumn term, affecting other cohorts of students and the continuation of mitigating actions. It was noted that some universities were beginning to take local action but there were associated risks, and as had happened in other sectors, resulting in the setting of local pay terms and conditions. Goldsmiths, whilst wanting to have good pay terms and conditions for staff, it also needed to find a way to progress this issue and in looking after students to attain their degrees and progressing to their favoured careers.</p>
9.7.	<p>In response to a question regarding confirmed awards where nearly half were re-sit progressions, it was noted that the number was very high, but it was not clear for the reasons behind it. This gave raise to concerns around the finances in respect of student numbers and retention, as well as whether any contingency had been made for meeting national agreements, should the deal be above budget and would add to the already complex budget situation. It was acknowledged that this was a difficult time for the sector and that Goldsmiths had worked hard to put itself on an even keel, but there was more work to be done should the current boycott continue.</p> <p><b>Action: The Chief Operating Officer would continue to provide Council with updates around the marking and assessment boycott, and should this continue, Council would receive a copy of mitigating actions that the Senior Management Team were taking.</b></p>
9.8.	<p>Council noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) A marking and assessment boycott is being observed at Goldsmiths.</li> <li>ii) The publication of confirmed results for all undergraduate students and many postgraduate students would be expected between 3 and 21 July 2023.</li> <li>iii) Some students (numbers provided below) may receive provisional results or no results.</li> <li>iv) A Critical Incident Group, under the oversight of the Senior Management Team, is taking such action as is required and possible to secure the interests of affected students.</li> <li>v) On 19 June 2023, the College reported to the Office for Students that it foresaw the marking and assessment boycott having a material impact on the interests of its students.</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<b>OfS Reportable Events</b>
10.1.	<p>Council noted that Pursuant to Regulatory Guidance (Relevant Section 16) OfS was notified of a “change of circumstances” (a change of the College’s Prevent Lead) on 7 July 2023.</p>
	<i>4:14pm – Edward Venning joined the meeting.</i>
	<b>Strategy 2023-28 (Strategy Bundle)</b>

<b>11.</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
11.1.	Council noted that the timelines had been updated to reflect that the strategy had taken longer to produce and the date of the official launch in the House of Lords. In particular, Council and committee dates had been moved to allow for timely decision-making in line with the programme's key touch points.
11.2.	<p>Council noted that the meeting would need to focus on the assumption that the College would get the required number of students, however, it was necessary to acknowledge that thought needed to be given to alternative options regarding the operational plans and risks as the position became clearer towards the beginning of term. Questions were raised about the viability of the timetabling and associated work within the set time periods, and at what point were decisions made on budgeting to support the delivery, and resourcing to deliver the transformational activity, of the strategy, as well as the day-to-day business of the College. Currently it was clear that none of the budget or resourcing questions could be resolved until there was the necessary clarity about student numbers, but the Finance and Resources Committee would be asked to further consider future investments in relation to budgets before the next Council meeting. The Council Strategy Sub-Group would be asked to consider the timetable further before the next Council meeting. In looking forward, Council requested that the terms of reference for the Council Strategy Implementation Sub-Group were brought back to the next meeting of Council.</p> <p><b>Action: the Finance and Resources Committee to consider the operational plan and budgets and the timelines for investments once student numbers had been finalised to ensure the ability to deliver some of the strategic transformational activity and the order of priority and timelines.</b></p> <p><b>Action: the Council Strategy Sub-Group to consider the timetable further before the next Council meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Action: the Director of Governance and Legal Services to bring the terms of reference for the Council Strategy Implementation Sub-Group back to the next meeting of Council for approval.</b></p> <p><b>Outline Strategic Argument</b></p>
11.3.	Council advised that the overall summary should tally consistently with other sections around collaboration, partnership, and inter-disciplinary working. The document also mentioned individual departments which needed ironing out, as did the agreed priorities, as well as stating what measures would be in place to monitor the progress of the strategy. Section C also lacked the necessary top-level measurements. In terms of the enabling plans, international had been removed and woven throughout the strategy, and would be added with governance to the timetable. Advice was also being sought amongst universities in terms of good practice and the sensitivities of the growth and diversification element. The Senior Management Team would now focus on the enabling plans, with particular importance placed on the people plan, which would in turn bring better understanding on the measurements and the connectivity between the enablers and would be produced in a balanced scorecard.
11.4.	It was noted that the financial independence enabling plan was much improved with information included about replenishing certain financial aspects, and it was suggested that there should be specific reference to replenishment for plant and capital expenditure, given that much of the College's physical plant was depleted and needed to be a priority. Connectivity between the Estates Plan and expansion in this enabling plan was also key,

	<p>as was associated links in terms of international versus domestic students as this could impact the budget. Likewise, elements of the strategic plan would be driven by activity that was required to restore the financial sustainability. With respect to this Council would shortly be asked to consider a social service improvement plan which would look at the next step of the recovery plan, the additional budget savings and integrated with the strategy.</p>
11.5.	<p>Council endorsed the revised outline argument and direction of travel, which summarised Goldsmiths' strategy 2023-2033, subject to the comments made being taken into account.</p>
	<p><b>Social Innovation Pillar</b></p>
11.6.	<p>In response to a question regarding the associated finances regarding the social innovation, Council noted that the Senior Management Team were waiting to understand what resources would be required for this pillar to build this into the budget. This pillar was taking a phased approach building on the civic work already being taken throughout the College where it had secured funding, developed community partnerships, and invested in the provision of re-skilling programmes for local communities and businesses. This in turned enhanced Goldsmiths' reputation and attracted students to the organisation by getting the quality of courses right, as well as seeing the demonstrable evidence of the training skills being acquired, and how students could make a difference once they graduated in terms of future careers. Given the importance of the Civic Universities agreement, it was agreed that Goldsmiths being part of it and some of those measurements, should be included in the document. It was noted here, that whilst there would likely be investment required in the pillar, in the short term there were unlikely to be many tangible measurements, as these would be more long-term. This pillar did tie with research teaching and the values of the College and as an independent metric was practical. There was, however, some concern that international students were transient and that there needed to be a focus on innovation rather than the product. Again, more of Goldsmiths' collaboration should be included in the document, and in particular with other education establishments in South London.</p>
	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p>
11.7.	<p>Council noted that work continued in connecting the different levels of strategy and how those should be linked to the operational plans, with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), strategic plans, local team plans and individual indicators that would be routinely reported upon in the balanced scorecard.</p>
11.8.	<p>Council noted the progress in forming the Goldsmiths Strategy 2033 and developing the enabling plans.</p>
	<p><b>Key Performance Indicators</b></p>
11.9.	<p>Council noted that the five headline KPIs referred to the impact survey, financial surplus and quality ranges covering different aspects of the overall strategy. The plan was to allow Council to have early insight as to how the College were performing against the KPIs, then beneath that would be Performance Indicators (PIs) that may relate to all KPIs.</p>
11.10.	<p>Council welcomed future iterations of the documents being circulated outside meeting. With regard to the balanced scorecard, further work needed to take place in refining the detail in table 2 to be the top line measurements alongside further KPIs around financial performance and people management. It was suggested that reporting took place on a</p>



	<p>rotational basis for KPIs to be presented to Council to allow for deep diving into activity where required; and that a trajectory was provided that showed what metrics were changing, particularly in the first couple of years.</p>
11.11.	<p>Thanks were given to those Council members who had provided regular feedback to the strategy thus far, and Council were reminded that any further feedback should be provided to the team directly.</p>
11.12.	<p>Council considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the appropriateness of the proposed five critical measures of excellence and mission which made up the KPIs for Goldsmiths Core Pillars and Enabling Plans</li> <li>• what lagging/leading performance indicators (PIs) Council would wish to see linked to the KPIs and Core Pillars/Enabling Plans in the Goldsmiths Strategy.</li> <li>• which of the current KPIs Council would wish to retain for the Core Pillars/Enabling Plans as PIs.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>5:06pm – Edward Venning left the meeting.</i></p>
	<p><b>Governance</b></p>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Governor Responsibilities</b></p>
12.1.	<p>Council noted that this item would be moved to the Autumn agenda to ensure that sufficient time was given to this important subject.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Disclosure to Council of SMT Research and Consultations (Paper G)</b></p>
13.1.	<p>Professor Michael Guggenheim set out the reasoning behind his request in that all research undertaken by the College was completed following a standard set of rules. The Director Governance and Legal Services set out from a governance perspective that “the concept of governance is about checks and balances within the HEI to ensure that it is well managed, about the allocation of responsibility, appropriate common themes, build-up of responsibility and about other duties. Going forward, many of the governance problems in the higher and further education sectors in recent decades can be traced to a breakdown in systems, checks and balances where these are not clearly understood or expected by management.” The question here was whether the proposition violated the principle of good governance as stated, and if it were to be adopted, whether it would lead to the erosion of that necessary gap between governance and the Executive. For instance, it was likely that should a Senior Management Team proposition need Council direction, then this would be an erosion of that gap. However, research as had been described took place under agreement between universities and academic institutions, for public benefit. This was a matter for Council to decide whether this would cause problems in the principle of good governance as described.</p>
13.2.	<p>Council made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a distinction between academic research and what was required in the daily running of universities in gaining feedback and views from communities.</li> <li>• As the governing body of the organisation, Council’s role was not to commission research, and if it did, it was likely to compromise the boundaries between governance and the Executive.</li> <li>• Council should only receive the headlines of significant consultation exercises.</li> <li>• Council already received significant amounts of information, and if more was received, then members would be expected to have digested it.</li> </ul>

13.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a great reminder of the role of a Council, where particularly at Goldsmiths, all too often it got immersed in the details and tried to direct the Senior Management Team.</li> <li>• This was a decision for the Senior Management Team.</li> </ul> <p>A further member of Council seconded the proposition made reiterating the mechanism required to allow stakeholders to see the basis of the consultation as happened with other public bodies. Currently the way the information was presented was biased and not all views were taken into account which was causing a lack of distrust in the Senior Management Team. The attempt to get openness and transparency was applauded and welcomed by other Council members, but also felt that approval of such a blunt tool had raised all kinds of reservations and suggested that the recommendation should have been presented in a different way. The matter of distrust in the Senior Management Team was, however, a question for Council. Related to this, concerns had been raised regarding the handling of the strategy and it was confirmed that the Senior Management Team had made clear commitments to a people strategy, through which staff views could be translated back to Council. A vote in support of this motion was taken, and not passed, with the majority of Council members not supporting the motion as written. There were three votes for, *** votes against, and no abstentions.</p> <p><i>17:28 – Council took a break and returned at 17:35</i></p>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Committee Impact Reports (Paper H)</b>
14.1.	This item had been withdrawn as there had been no committee meetings since the last meeting.
<b>15.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
15.1.	Thanks to Anna Carlile, Paul Rowlett, and Mike Vincent for their stewardship of business throughout their tenure at Goldsmiths.
<b>Next Meeting: Wednesday 4 October 2023</b>	