



Goldsmiths Students' Union  
Annual General Meeting  
Online  
12 June, 12:00 - 13:00

### Agenda

	Item	Presenter	Time	Page
1	Welcome	Victoria	12:05-12:10	-
2	Goldsmiths' Annual Statement of Accounts	Ed	12:10-12:25	Papers can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>
3	Trustees' Annual Report	Victoria	12:25-12:40	2-23
4	Student Forum's Report and Passed Policies	Mana	12:40-12:50	24-32
6	Questions/AOB	-	12:50-1:00	-



### Charitable status

Goldsmiths Students' Union (Goldsmiths SU and GSU) is an incorporated organisation and registered Charity in England and Wales. Registration number 1194727

**Principal Address** Dixon Road New Cross London SE14 6NW

**Chief Exec** Ed Nedjari

### Charity Trustees

Role	From 15 June 2022	From 14 June 2023
Chair of Trustees President	Hafsa Haji	Victoria Chwa
Sabbatical Officer	Tor Ayrton	Nour Matar
Sabbatical Officer	Victoria Chwa	Isabelle Tarrant
Sabbatical Officer	Islam Alkhatib	Gammnorah Briton Gibson
Student Trustee	Michael McArthur (Dec 22)	Levante Bauer
Student Trustee	Elsabet Genti (From Dec 22)	Luca-Dimambo-Moor
Student Trustee	Vacant	Vacant
Student Trustee	Vacant	Vacant
External (Lay) Trustee	Stephen Norton	Stephen Norton
External (Lay) Trustee	Pradeep Thathai	Pradeep Thathai
External (Lay) Trustee	Vacant	Kofi Siew



External (Lay) Trustee	Eireann Attridge	Abigail Mensah (Dec 23)
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Auditors	Bankers	Solicitors
Crowe UK LLP  Statutory Auditor  49-51 Blagrove Street  Reading  RG1 1PL	The Co-Operative Bank  151 Lewisham High St  Lewisham  London  SE13 6AA	Bates, Well & Braithwaite  LLP  BDP Pitmans

The Trustee Board present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2022, which includes the administrative information set out later in the document, together with the audited accounts for that year.

### **Structure, governance and management**

Goldsmiths Students' Union is constituted under the Education Act 1994 as a charity with internal regulations or Rules approved by the governing body of Goldsmiths College (the College).

The Trustee Board has 8 elected student members (the four 'sabbatical' posts and four students who continue with their studies) alongside up to four appointed



external trustees and is responsible for overseeing the management and administration of the Union. The Board is responsible for the overall governance, the budget and setting the strategy and direction of the Union. The Board delegates the day-to-day running of Goldsmiths Students' Union to a Chief Executive.

As the charity trustees, all Officers receive an induction into their legal and administrative responsibilities, with an ongoing training programme as and when needed for issues arising during their term of office.

The four posts of President, Education Officer, Campaigns & Activities Officer, and Welfare & Diversity Officer are full-time, or 'sabbatical', posts remunerated as authorised by the 1994 Education Act and cannot exceed two years as an elected sabbatical officer.

Goldsmiths Students' Union operates on democratic principles, with the Student Assembly setting the policy and political agenda of the Union, scrutinising the Trustees and electing students to serve on College committees.

The four sabbatical officers regularly meet with senior managers of the Union to review the charity's performance and administration generally and to determine appropriate approaches between meetings of the Trustee Board.

The Union employs staff, including students, to deliver activities of the organisation, and employ around 20 staff to support the continuity of its activities from one year to the next.

## Management Team

Ed Nedjari - Chief Executive

Rhiannon Suchak - Engagement Manager

Wala Osman - HR Manager

Beauty Odeyimi - Intermin HR manager

Lisa Ronson - Finance Manager

Oliver Roscoe - Head of Commercial



Saner Gursel - Interim Head of Commercial

Danielle Sevenoaks - Comms Manager

Zainab Turay - Advice Manager

### **Public Benefit Disclosure**

The Union's Objects are the advancement of education of students at Goldsmiths College for the Public Benefit by:

Providing an official organisation to represent its members both within, and outside, the College.

Providing and developing scientific, artistic, cultural, political, and environmental. Ethical, religious, sporting and social activities (including awareness) among its members and ensuring that the general welfare of the student body at large through both commercial and non-commercial services

Promoting the general welfare of its members without discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, language, sexuality, age, religion, or marital status. Disability, medical status or political belief

Advancing the interests of the University, for the benefit of the Union's members, in all the appropriate ways

Promoting the involvement of its members within the local community

Working with other students' Unions, organisations with similar objects and affiliated bodies.

The Trustees have given careful regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit. This is tabled for discussion at each Trustee Board meeting.

### **Relationship with Goldsmiths College**



The relationship between the College and the Union is established in the Regulations of the College and detailed in Rules approved by both organisations. The Union receives a Block Grant from the College and occupies a building owned by the College, which also pays for utilities. This non-monetary support is intrinsic to the relationship between the College and the Union. Although the Union seeks to generate supplementary funding from various mutual trading activities, it is heavily dependent on the College's support.

There is no reason to believe that this or equivalent support from the College will not continue for the foreseeable future, as the Education Act 1994 and College strategy commit to ongoing funding of the charity. The college is currently writing a ten-year strategy that we have a role to play in. It's worth mentioning the university is also going through its 3 restructure in 5 years and is at the time of writing around £ 15 million in deficit

### **Trustee Board**

Appointments to the Trustee Board as a lay trustee are recruited via an advert and interview process. Our Trustee Board is in a continual process of addition and terms coming to an end. Sabbatical officers and student trustees are in office for one year, unless re-elected by members or change their category of office.

At least one session with Trustees each year is dedicated to learning & development. New trustees received a copy of CC3: The Essential Trustee. We regularly review the induction process in line with NCVO guidance and trustees will be sent on NCVO trustee training and given a code of conduct to follow.

### **Trustee Board Responsibilities**

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements by applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to



- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions, disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the charity's constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Risk Management**

The Trustee Board has examined the major strategic, business and operational risks faced by Goldsmiths Students' Union. A risk register has been established and is scheduled for review. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the charity's risks.

The implementation of procedures for the authorisation of all transactions and projects minimises budgetary and internal control risks. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers and participants on all activities organised by the Union.

These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. The senior management of the charity have acted on previous Audit reports and they will be supported by Trustees to ensure this continues.

Trustees have had sight of a risk register that they can comment and discuss at meetings

### **Fundraising**

The charity had no fundraising activities requiring disclosure under S162A of the Charities Act 2011.



## **Aims, Objectives and activities**

The organisation focused on the following priorities for 2022-2023

**Holding the university to account**

**Supporting students both on campus and remotely**

**Working on the creation of a new strategy for launch in 2023**

## **2022/23 SABB TEAM WINS**

Our Elected Full-Time Officers last year had many projects and campaigns that they successfully worked towards and achieved great results. Below is a summary of their wins.

An impactful Performance Audit Report on the Management of the College and presentation to the College Council.

Kickstarting the SU Archive Project.

Coordinated and produced accessible key info for students on many occasions where there were gaps in College communications, such as on strikes, transcript and grade delays.

New Liberation Full

Community Chats programme for students.

New Student Handbooks to officially launch in 23/24 Academic Year, including the International Student Handbook, Housing, Rights and Complaints Handbook, Student Rep Handbook, Student Survival Guide and more resources.

Representing and supporting students through a range of issues and cases stemming from admin and impacting wellbeing, student finance and access.

Being a strong voice in key College committee meetings.

Securing another round of funding for the CARE Project for the 22/23 academic year.

## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**





This academic year saw a drop in student engagement with some aspects of the Students' Union. Throughout the year, the Membership Services team organised many events and opportunities for students to be involved in. These events ranged from Black History Month talks and engagement training with Student Reps, to annual Christmas and end-of-year events.

The events that saw good engagement were those that appealed to many students, such as our Winter and Summer Balls. These events are primarily aimed towards members of Sports and Societies, however, it is open for all students to attend.

The events that saw lower engagement tended to be those that were more specific, such as pre-organised educational talks.

This low engagement seems unprecedented for GSU; in previous years (particularly before Covid) GSU would put on a range of activities that appealed to many different students.

These events would be well engaged with and well known about. However, since returning to a fully in-person academic and social world, we have noticed significant changes in the student population. Below, we have listed our understanding and observation of students' engagement.

## **COVID AND THE 'LEGACY'**

During the Covid period, especially during national lockdown and restrictions, students were not on campus and therefore not meeting each other and engaging with events. Online engagement was significantly lower than in-person engagement. Coming back from this significant drop in engagement is difficult as students are not used to attending in-person events. Many students found comfort and accessibility in being able to work and study from home during Covid. When returning back to campus, these accessibility requirements were not mimicked in the in-person activity. Therefore, many students may not physically come onto campus due to this.

Student engagement heavily relies on the idea of a legacy being passed on. Student leaders 'pass on' their leadership roles to students in lower years; Elected Officers form connections with students and encourage them to run for FT and PT officer roles; Students who typically run events informally and formally train other students to carry on these events once they've graduated. This legacy was not passed on from students to one another as they were not physically together to do so.



Therefore, we have essentially started from scratch to rebuild the SU legacy and knowledge among students

Covid meant that SU staff had significantly less interaction with students as a whole for around 2 years. In this time, the world and therefore students' wants and needs have drastically changed. The academic year 22/23 was largely spent understanding what students want and need from us now.

The lack of the legacy being passed on from student generations has also impacted the Students' Union in that we discovered (through outreach and student voice mechanisms) that less students were aware of what the SU actually is, what we do, and where we are. This would have a direct impact on every aspect of our engagement.

## **COST OF LIVING**

We have seen COL have a direct and significant impact on students. This year particularly with COL paired with the national inflation, our costs have gone up which may have resulted in less student engagement as they cannot afford to attend paid-for events. Also due to COL, students have even more limited financial resources compared to previous years. This may result in students physically coming onto campus less as they cannot afford the travel costs to and from Goldsmiths. Due to the limited financial resources, students may not be more likely to take up part-time work (or take on more hours for their part-time work) to be able to afford basic living expenses. If students spend more time at work, they will have less time to spend at university and the Students' Union.

## **STRIKE ACTION**

There were many weeks and days of strike action during this academic year, both academic strikes and national train strikes. During strike periods, there is a significant fall in the number of students on campus. Therefore, if any events were running on these days, it was highly likely that our engagement would be low. Due to strike action, students also had less physical time on campus (including exploring the



campus, seeking events to attend) and so it was harder for the SU to promote itself to students.

## **ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

This year there was a significant increase in academic and administrative issues with Goldsmiths' College. Students saw negative repercussions of the restructure which heavily affected the efficiency and running of key administration, such as enrolment and receiving grades. Students, as a result, have increasingly accessed our Advice service (see figures on next page) and seemingly spend a larger amount of time on their academic life.

Due to these issues, there is a direct effect on students where they may be struggling with university in general and/or become demystified with university life as they feel unheard and missold. This has a direct impact on student engagement as they are less likely to have time and seek out activities when their time and energy is spent battling administrative issues.

## **CLUBS AND SOCIETIES**

Throughout this past academic year (2022/23), we have consistently nurtured our sports clubs and societies, fostering their growth. Student Leaders have learnt key skills and had important support from GSU's Coordinators in order to facilitate the engagement and organisation of sports and societies, leading to a highly successful year for clubs and societies.

Our constant interaction with students on both a group and individual level has allowed us to truly get to know our students and what they want and expect from GSU. We have amended and updated our processes and training, such as the Student Leaders training, to run things more smoothly, efficiently and meaningfully.

Our commitment to students this year has been to equip students with the necessary support to thrive in their respective clubs and societies.

Overall, we have 243 Student Leaders who fulfil the roles of President, Treasurer and Secretary in clubs and societies. We have 1,219 student group members in total, which provides a £23,033 income. This compares to the previous year where we had 1,565 student group members in total, which provided a £18,701 income.

There are a few reasons that we suggest for this data:



Our sports membership costs have increased for students as a result of national inflation and our annual grant not covering all costs for sports (for example, sports transport, hiring fees, and coach/trainer fees). There has been a significant engagement decrease due to several barriers this year (please see the 'Engagement section above)

We have found that increasingly students are not going through the formal methods of officially becoming a member of a society, so the numbers do not always accurately reflect the true level of engagement

## **SPORTS CLUBS**

We have 21 active sports clubs at GSU with a total of 379 memberships. This compares to the previous year (21/22) where we had 23 clubs and 390 memberships.

Incorporated within every sports club is a variety of membership options from social to competitive memberships which aim to cater for all abilities and levels of interest, making each club a diverse and inclusive environment for all.

We have a growing number of alumni teams which provided graduating students an exit route into clubs and continued sporting activity. Alumni teams help to curb the high drop- out rate of sport post university and strengthen the peer-to-peer networks between undergraduates and alumni students from Goldsmiths.

Over the year we have seen some fantastic students and clubs succeed at different levels, including:

**Men's Basketball coming 1st in the LUSL League and 2nd in the BUCS League.**

**Taekwondo winning 1x Gold, 3x Silver, and 1x Bronze medals at the LUSL Autumn Championships.**

**Cheer coming 3rd in Future Cheer and 3rd in UK Nationals.**

We witnessed a competitive and exciting Varsity this year in March. Varsity is an annual multi-sport competition against the University of Arts London in what is known as the Arts Cup. This year 10 teams took part in a thrilling day of competition. The main ethos of Varsity is having pride in representing the team and university with a



positive and competitive spirit. This year's theme was, 'All In'. The results of Varsity were: 6 – 4 to the University of Arts

GSU seeks to support our sports students throughout their university journey. From joining sports teams competitively and socially, training in facilities, and having personal support from GSU, to receiving grants for memberships through our Access Grant scheme and receiving financial support through our Talented Athlete Programme, we aim to support each and every student interested in sport in any way we can. This year we awarded £1000 in our Access Grant, which allowed 23 students to have access to our competitive and social sports memberships.

We also awarded 7 students with grants, totalling to £2,065, through our Sports Development scheme. This allows individual students to develop sport-specific skills to personally progress as well as to improve their skills to help their sports club.

*"I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO HAVE THE FUNDING FROM GOLDSMITHS SU TO JOIN THE MIXED VOLLEYBALL CLUB DURING THESE TOUGH TIMES, THE TEAM IS VERY LOVELY AND VERY WELCOMING AND I THINK ANYONE THAT WANTS TO JOIN THE TEAM EVEN WITH NO EXPERIENCE DEFINITELY SHOULD! IT'S A GREAT WAY TO KEEP FIT AND HEALTHY AND BE PART OF SOMETHING AT GOLDSMITHS. I AM SUPER EXCITED TO BE A PART OF THE TEAM!"*

*Anisah Zainab (Mixed Volleyball)*

*"I JOINED THE CHEER SOCIETY LAST YEAR AND I WILL SAY IT MADE A GREAT PART OF MY UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE. I GAINED SEVERAL NEW SKILLS AND MADE AND MADE SOME REALLY GOOD FRIENDS. CHEER IS A SPORT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY BUT I WASN'T IN PROXIMITY OF A LOCAL TEAM NOR DID I HAVE THE FUNDS. WITHOUT THE HARDSHIP FUND I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PARTAKE IN A SPORT I BECAME PASSIONATE ABOUT, TO CHALLENGE AND PUSH MYSELF PAST WHAT I THOUGHT WERE MY LIMITS, LIKE PERFORMING IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE, PARTAKING IN COMPETITIONS, QUICKLY ADAPTING TO CHANGES, OR LEARNING NEW SKILLS I DIDN'T THINK I WAS CAPABLE OF. I GAINED A NEWFOUND RESPECT FOR TEAM SPORTS WITH ENCOURAGING TEAMMATES. NOW, NOT ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF MY TEAM I JUST WANT TO KEEP BETTERING MYSELF AND CHALLENGING MY BODY. I KNOW THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE IF I PUT MY MIND TO IT."*

*Kylie Marume (Cheerleading)*



## **SOCIETIES**

We have 40 active societies over 22/23, representing different student interests, courses and beliefs. Over the academic year we saw over 100 in-person and online events being organised by societies. This includes 71 events in the College, 26 of which are regular recurring bookings. Some key highlights for societies are:

**Musical Theatre Societies performance of Pippin in the George Wood Theatre, which ran for a total of 6 shows, two of which were sold out**

**Desi Society's Diwali Event, Diva**

**Islamic Society's Charity Week stalls (one week of stalls outside of RHB to raise money for charity)**

**Afro-Caribbean Societies Open Mic night and poetry reading**

A stand-out event for GSU was our Student Union Awards where Sports clubs, Societies, and individuals took home awards that ranged from Society Leader of the Year, to Player of the Year, to Programme Rep of the Year (UG and PG). Out of over 60 nominations, 20 Sports Clubs, Societies and individuals went home with an award.

## **ADVICE SERVICE**

The Advice service is an independent, impartial, confidential and free service that advises, supports and educates any and all students with issues that relate to academic student life, such as academic misconduct or making a complaint. Advisors offer consultations via email, in online meetings, in in-person meetings, or in drop-in sessions with students to help them through relevant challenges they are facing. This year, the Advice Team has faced an unprecedented number of student cases. In particular, students have been seeking the Advice Team for things such as administration issues and appeals. The number of these issues is higher than in previous years which is likely a direct result of the College's professional services restructure.

Our Advice Manager reports:



From May (2023), there has been a large number of enquiries regarding administrative errors/irregularities that has increased the number of students contacting us. Unfortunately, this continued with high numbers throughout the summer until late October, early November. There has been a much larger number of appeals regarding module errors, incorrect or late deadline dates given to students, rejected extenuating circumstances applications and students withdrawn from their courses. The knock-on effects of this is that cases have sat with advisers much longer.” . Not only is there an increase in student cases, there is also an increase in the average length of case which creates an additional burden to our Advice Team who have all now been at maximum capacity for over a year.

Since September 2022 - August 2023, there have been a total of 482 individual cases. Out of the 482 cases, 424 were Academic Cases which range from appeals, withdrawals and complaints to mitigating circumstances, resits, and academic conduct. It is important to note that this number does not include the number of 1-off walk-in cases that Advisors have, nor does it account for the number of cases that our Sabbatical Officers have over the year. The number of cases compares to the previous year where there were 212. The number of cases for the year has more than doubled.

Further, the Advice Team has assisted 11 students with receiving financial compensation. The compensation amounts to £19,316 in total. This compares to the previous year where we assisted 9 students in gaining a total of £13,707. This Advice data clearly reflects the extreme increase in student issues and challenges in the past year.

## **THE CARE PROJECT**

CARE stands for consent and relationship education. CARE at GSU is a student-led community campaigning for change through education, advocacy and policy work.

In the year 22/23 we rebranded from the Against Sexual Violence (ASV) Project to CARE to support our renewed focus on community care and trauma-informed approach. The year was challenging, rebuilding from a solely digital presence on campus alongside transport and UCU strikes meant a reduction in engagement with the workshops. However, we worked hard to rebuild the foundations of our work. Alongside rebranding we implemented an ambassador programme encouraging a group of 5 student volunteers to get involved and started to experiment with alternative workshops including a queer self-defence class with Bender Defenders. Some highlights from CARE this year include:



**Recruiting the new CARE Project Coordinator**

**Hiring 4 Peer Facilitators to run Against Bystander Workshops (ABWs)**

**Recruiting 4 CARE Ambassadors**

**Launching the new CARE branding Running 29 ABWs**

**Training 38 Active Bystanders**

**Having 11 outreach stalls over the year**

**Running other workshops such as self-defence**

The feedback from Peer Facilitators this year truly reflected the care and hard work that went into re-starting this project:

*100% strongly agreed 'I feel like a valued member of the team'*

*100% strongly agreed 'I feel supported by the CARE Project Coordinator' 100% agreed or strongly agreed 'I enjoy being a Peer Facilitator'*

*100% agreed or strongly agreed 'Being a Peer Facilitator has helped grow my skills and experiences'*

## **STUDENT VOICE, REPRESENTATION AND POLICY**

Our Departmental Student Coordinators and Programme Reps help to build the community within the students' course and department. DSCs and Programme Reps work together to gather meaningful student feedback so we, as the union, can work to make the change that students want to see. We have 41 Departmental Student Coordinators, 2 Student School Coordinators, 2 Post Graduate Research Reps and over 219 Programme Reps.

Our Student Voice Coordinator, Maheda, summarises her work with Student Reps below.

"We had 7 monthly meetings with the School Student Coordinators and Departmental Student Coordinators between November 2022 to June 2023. The purpose of the Monthly DSC meetings are for the reps to give the SU feedback on students' educational experiences where trends are identified within their department. The DSCs, SSCs and the Education Officer spoke on what they have been working on to help resolve any difficulties students were facing. I was able to





support DSCs with any issues that had remained unresolved and pushed for a change or solution whether it was with estates, tutors, head of departments etc. For example, in one of the meetings, a DSC asked if there could be an opportunity for an automated system to request extensions online which they can self-certify. I have been pushing for this change this year which is currently an ongoing conversation.

In my view these meetings have been a great opportunity for DSCs and SSCs from all schools to get together in one place and hear about any updates or results from previous meetings. Some of the benefits of these meetings were that reps exchanged ideas with each other and shared good practice on how to progress in relatable situations or how they were connecting with students within their departments. Myself and the Education Officer were able to signpost or answer any queries they may have had during the meeting. I advised them on how to better work with departments and also about any events and activities taking place at the SU for them to get involved and remain engaged with us.

From the DSCs feedback to myself, all of the above helped with maintaining relationships with the reps. Additionally over time they were able to gain confidence and play an active role in the student representation team.”

This year we saw the first year of implementing our new Post Graduate Research Reps (PGRs) and Student School Coordinators (SSCs). These roles were created to create further representation and feedback channels for PG students (PGRs), and for support, feedback mechanisms, and more structure from the SSCs for DSCs.

We also saw the first year of our Liberation Officers and Liberation Networks. We have 6 Liberation Networks: BME Students’ Network, Disabled Students’ Network, International Students’ Network, LGBTQ+ Students’ Network, Trans and Non-Binary Students’ Network and Women Students’ Network. Throughout the year the Liberation Officers worked with the networks to form community led events and hold spaces for these groups.

Some highlights from the Networks include:

**All Liberation Networks holding introductory events during Welcome Week 22/23**

**LGBTQ+ Network running 8 events over the year, including a Halloween party at the New Cross House which had over 40 people attend**



**International Students Network running a Coffee Meet up which provided a crucial space for International Students to feedback what they want from the Network in the following year**

**Trans and Non-Binary Network running an Open Mic event for Trans Day of Visibility**

Our Officer Election in March 2023 went successfully this year, despite having lower voter numbers than expected. All full-time Officer roles, 1 part-time officer role, the Union Chair role and 1 Student Trustee position were filled. The election numbers compared to previous years are as follows:

Total Voters: 398    Total Individual Votes: 2029

[For the full Election report, please see here.](#)

This year proved to be the year of change as we also implemented our new Governance and Democracy structure at GSU(1). In this first year we focussed on running these new structures for the first time and understanding any further small changes that would need to be made. As a result of implementing these new structures, we amended and updated our constitution and bylaws.

Over the academic year 2022-23, we planned for the Student Forum and its subcommittees to take place quarterly, as was set out in the G+D Review.

### **STUDENT FORUM.**

Out of the three Student Forum meetings planned throughout the year (February 8th, April 19th, June 9th) the first two were attended by Sabbatical Officers and two Student Trustees but not the Union Chair, and the third one was only attended by Sabbatical Officers. In the first of these forums, the Fossil Free Careers Motion was put to vote and passed as SU Policy. Also, there was a revoting on policies due to lapse after a 3 year period. Out of this, the Policy Archive on GSU website was created which archives our active, lapsed and proposed policies. In the second Student Forum of the year Trustees received updates from Officers. We had a motion submitted to increase Sabbatical Officers Pay that was discussed in the third Student Forum of the year but could not be voted on due to conflict of interest.



An additional emergency Student Forum was held on September 26th in front of RHB, which was attended by a number of students, 7 of whom gave testimonials.

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Three Education Committee meetings went ahead as planned on January 24th, April 5th and June 5th, with the presence of the Education Officer and SSCs.

### **LIBERATION COMMITTEE**

The dates for Liberation Committee meetings were February 1st, March 29th and May 31st. The first meeting was attended by the President and one of the PTOs. The second meeting did not take place due to the absence of PTOs. The last meeting was attended by the President and two of the PTOs.

### **ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

This committee did not take place last year, as none of the student leaders signed up to be on the committee.

### **AGM**

After a quorum was not present during the first AGM, the meeting was adjourned and resumed on June 1st. The meeting was attended by three staff members, three Sabbatical Officers and five Students who constituted a Quorum according to GSU Constitution. A Resolution was passed at this meeting to amend the GSU Constitution, Goldsmiths' Annual State of Accounts, Trustees Annual Report and Student Forum's Report and Passed Policies were received.

Although engagement with some of the sub-committees was not ideal last year due to various reasons, having the updated Constitution and Bye-laws will allow us to truly harness the energy of these new democratic structures. It is important to note that the academic year 2022-23 was the first year that these new structures were introduced at GSU, and now that we've had our first round of Committee meetings and Forum this year it is clear that things are on the right track in case of engagement.

We have started to in-formalise the comms that go out to students about these meetings based on feedback received in committee meetings, as well as introducing new ways (such as Snack & Chat) for engaged students to be part of the SU Community that will in turn allow them to be more involved with our democratic structures. Last year we also had two motions submitted to us which was a clear



boost in engagement with the motion submission process, since our last motions before that were from the year 2018-19.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall it has been a year of learning for the Membership Services team at GSU. Everything we have experienced and learnt from students has been noted and transformed into a new engagement strategy for the 2023/24 academic year.

The direction of the Membership Services strategy is reflected in the SU overall 3-year SU strategy, beginning this year, as well as our 3-year individual KPIs and objectives.

Student engagement and experience is at the heart of our Union, and we enter the next year with hope and enthusiasm to make the student experience even better at Goldsmiths.

## **Commercial Operations**

We have seen a new and maybe slightly predictable change in the spending habits of our clientele this year. Due to inflation persisting - with no obvious signs of deflation or general income increase, more money is being spent on the 'necessities' in contrast to the luxuries; in our case, retail and cafe income has increased, and alcohol and event spending has decreased. The Welcome period was, as predicted, well attended in the event areas, but numbers started dropping soon after this was over. Conversely, spending was lower in the other areas, then picked up immediately after. This trend carried on for the rest of the year, with the only respite coming in the form of many frequent weekend bookings, with quite over-the-odds spending compared to our standard clientele. In other areas of improvement from prior years, suppliers have improved on their stock availability, and delivery targets are being hit allowing for seamless trade.

## **Regular events**

This year saw the continuation of our long-running Tuesday event, Trashy Tuesday in the Bar & Venue, still maintaining an average figure of between 300-400 attendees. Even though not technically regular, we have been privately renting the venue space out on many consecutive Saturday nights, and have a frequent Sunday hire that has been running for many years and still remains as well attended as the first time it was held.



## **F&B**

Food & beverage have seen an inverse of each other in the previous year, with the bar making less than initially budgeted and the cafe making a surplus. The spending habits of our users seem to hint towards a greater spending in dry consumption, matching statistics seen nationwide that the younger generations do not have much of a penchant for alcohol, shunning it for daytime products such as coffee and smoothies, and preferring merchandise over the drinking buzz.

## **Retail**

Retail has exceeded predictions in 2022/23. The retail manager has expanded ranges, and the relatively new online shop has been used more than was initially expected. We have added a new hot food range in the premises which has gone down incredibly well, and we will be expanding it further over the next year. We are certain of continuous growth for the rest of the year thanks to dense external bookings over the summer, and the change in behaviour from students away from night spending to day spending,

## **Space Bookings**

Our events manager has been busy taking on bookings over the past year and is constantly looking for ways to extend our reputation further afield. We had a solid calendar over 2023, which is already continuing into 2024. We still have an ongoing relationship with Cornerstone Church every Sunday and have now opened up our Saturday daytimes to bookings from other sources.

## **Nursery SEND Funding**

The Nursery receives restricted funding from Lewisham for children with special needs. This SEND funding can support activities such as one-to-one support with children who require extra interaction, The purchase of specialist equipment or tech that helps the development of children with SEN requirements and training for staff so they can best support those children.

## **Finances**

The Finance Committee previously set a reserves policy which aims to generate reserves of £300k, the equivalent to three months of running costs



(excluding rent charge) for the continuation of current activities within the medium term. The Union has exceeded this target by £68,988.05. This amount has gone towards moving the Cafe from the first floor to the ground floor, increasing visibility and traffic, refurbishment of the venue space, providing improved amenities for students and renovating of the Nursery, providing more facilities and support for Nursery staff and pupils.

The remaining amounts have gone towards a cost-of-living increase for our staff, reducing turnover and providing support during significant inflation levels. Overall, commercial operations had a loss of £27,068 during 2022/23. Strategizing with the commercial teams, the SU is working towards a significantly reduced loss of approximately £2200, in FY 23/24 based on current forecasting, or a breakeven position.

At this current time, the Trustees have reviewed the position carefully with a view to ensuring the ongoing provision of student representation and services. The University grant funding decreased by £117,250 (11%) between FY 21/22 and FY22/23, but further decreases are not expected. The Students Union undertook restructuring in 2022/23 to ensure we can continue to provide students with the expected services. Conservative forecasting indicates that the Union is able to meet its obligations as they fall due. Accordingly, the Trustees believe the Union's financial resources are sufficient to ensure the Union will continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future, being at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements.

## **External Affiliations**

Affiliations Under the 1994 Education Act, the Union is required to report to its members, on an annual basis, all current external affiliations. The Union was affiliated to the following organisations:

- Advice UK
- Amateur Football Association
- British Universities College Sport



- Charity Comms
- England Basketball
- Jitsu Foundation
- National Council of Voluntary Organisations
- National Union of Students
- Rugby Football Union
- Student Radio Association
- Volleyball England



## **Motion: Immediate halt to the Transformation Programme and staff redundancies**

**Proposer:** Emily Gibbons-Filippini, MA Contemporary Art Theory, MA CAT student rep, [egibb003@gold.ac.uk](mailto:egibb003@gold.ac.uk)

**Seconder:** Janette Plain, BA Criminology, [jplai001@gold.ac.uk](mailto:jplai001@gold.ac.uk)

We note that...

- Goldsmiths has introduced and rapidly put into action the 'Transformation Programme' which intends to restructure the university from three schools and eighteen departments, to two faculties and eight schools, in order to significantly reduce modules and staff numbers.
- The proposed restructure puts over a half of staff jobs at risk across the Departments of: Visual Cultures; Music, Theatre, & Performance; English & Creative Writing; Media, Communications, and Cultural Studies; Politics & International Relations; History; Sociology; Anthropology; Social, Therapeutic, & Community Studies; Education Studies.<sup>1</sup>
- This programme comes just two years after a restructure that dissolved the Student Centre and dismissed the staff from the department of Professional Services.
- It is apparent from the Performance Audit Report produced by Goldsmiths Student Union in October 2022<sup>2</sup>, that the previous restructure led to major student and staff dissatisfaction and thus less student income due to reputational damage and falling enrollment numbers.
- Due to the previous restructure, administrative failures have significantly reduced enrollment numbers and particularly affected prospective international students due

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<sup>1</sup> *Goldsmiths Transformation Programme: Who's Next?* Accessed 28 March 2024.  
<https://binthetp.carrd.co/>

<sup>2</sup> Goldsmiths Students' Union, *Performance Audit Report on the Management of Goldsmiths, University of London*, Goldsmiths, University of London, October 2022, accessed 28 March 2024.  
<https://www.goldsmithssu.org/asset/News/6013/Performance-Audit-Report-on-the-Management-of-Goldsmiths-University-Oct-2022.pdf>





to delayed offer letters. This in turn affected the 'contribution rate' of departments and then the proposed staff redundancies.

- Goldsmiths has already recovered £10.1m of its claimed £14.2m budget shortfall through post-deletions, voluntary redundancies, and cuts to research.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the unpaid loans which were used to rationalise the Recovery Programme can be paid off. The Transformation Programme's target of £20m is simply driven by a desire to profit off of staff redundancies.
- On 23 November, 2020, the Professors Forum and Collective Change jointly organised a Vote of No Confidence against the Goldsmiths Senior Management Team in response to the mass redundancies and restructure posed by the Recovery Programme. 605 out of 698 votes, or 87%, declared they had no confidence in SMT.<sup>4</sup>
- A motion of Censure on the Warden was passed at the GUCU branch meeting on 8 January 2024.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that distrust in Professor Frances Corner and the SMT continues and has not been appropriately addressed by the Warden.
- Despite the Vote of No Confidence and the motion of Censure on the Warden, Warden Professor Frances Corner did not resign, and egregious financial mismanagement continued, for example the expense of almost £20,000 of university funds spent on private travel by the Warden from 2019-2021.<sup>6</sup>

We believe that...

- Goldsmiths' SMT proposed and enacted the Transformation Programme without holding a proper and thorough consultation with students, and did so at the end of a teaching period which resulted in a disruption of communication channels and awareness of the programme among students.

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<sup>3</sup> Goldsmiths University and College Union, *GUCU Support Fund*, Goldsmiths University and College Union, 25 March 2024, accessed 28 March 2024.

<https://goldsmithsucu.org/2024/03/25/gucu-support-fund/>

<sup>4</sup> Goldsmiths University and College Union, *GUCU response to No Confidence Vote*, Goldsmiths University and College Union, 26 November 2020, accessed 28 March 2024.

<https://goldsmithsucu.org/2020/11/26/gucu-response-to-no-confidence-vote/>

<sup>5</sup> Goldsmiths University and College Union, *Motion of Censure in the Warden*, 8 January 2024, accessed 28 March 2024. <https://goldsmithsucu.org/2024/01/08/motion-of-censure-in-the-warden/>

<sup>6</sup> Goldsmiths, University of London, *FOI 2379*, accessed 28 March 2024.

<https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/docs/public-information/foi/FOI-2379-Response-and-Attachments.pdf>



- Professor Frances Corner has helped to create a culture of distrust between Senior Management, staff, and students.
- As Warden, Professor Frances Corner must be held to account for financial mismanagement of the University's funds.
- Considering the £10.1m which has already been recovered, the financial imperative for such excessive action as the Transformation Programme is dubious at best.
- Students have been greatly misled in regards to their degrees in terms of academic content, opportunity, and student experience.
- The proposed Transformation Programme may be in contravention of students' contracts.
- The proposed Transformation Programme puts at risk unfinished degree courses for current enrolled students, impacting their academic and career opportunities.
- The proposed Transformation Programme puts academic staff's careers in a precarious position in a nationwide situation of low employment opportunities in the Higher Education sector.
- The proposed Transformation Programme's staff redundancies will economically and socially impact the borough of Lewisham, in which as of 2020 Goldsmiths was one of the largest employers and produced 1.3% of the borough's revenue.<sup>7</sup>
- The proposed Transformation Programme will cause untold reputational damage to Goldsmiths in the Higher Education sector due to its treatment of staff and predictable reduction of specialist knowledge and research output.

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<sup>7</sup> Sarah Cox, *CBI report highlights Goldsmiths' role in local economy*, Goldsmiths, University of London, 4 September 2020, accessed 28 March 2024.  
<https://www.gold.ac.uk/news/cbi-universities-and-economic-revival/>



- It is apparent that the proposed restructure does not take into account Goldsmith's focus as a university of arts, humanities, and social sciences. The restructure is entirely similar to the recent programme at the University of Kent consisting of a Portfolio Simplification, evaluation of 'contribution rates' and the resulting closure of their departments of Anthropology, Art History, Health & Social Care, Journalism, Music & Audio Technology, and Philosophy/Religious Studies.<sup>8</sup>
- An official, clear, and transparent report detailing the administrative failures of Goldsmiths University and their effects on student experience and enrollment numbers has not yet been produced.

We resolve to...

- Demand an immediate halt to the Transformation Programme and staff redundancies.
- Demand that Frances Corner publicly and transparently declare which programmes are targeted for cuts and the rationale behind each one individually.
- Demand that an official and transparent consultation with students and staff is conducted immediately in regards to the University's financial situation and the use of student fees.

### Sources:

Cox, Sarah. *CBI report highlights Goldsmiths' role in local economy*. Goldsmiths, University of London. 4 September 2020. Accessed 28 March 2024.

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Goldsmiths Students' Union. *Performance Audit Report on the Management of Goldsmiths, University of London*. Goldsmiths, University of London, October 2022.

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<sup>8</sup> University of Kent, *Future plans for Kent*, University of Kent, 21 March 2024, accessed 28 March 2024. <https://www.kent.ac.uk/news/statements/34743/future-plans-for-kent-2>



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## **Motion for the SU to demand action in light of the University's Transformation Programme**

### **This Union Notes:**

On 02/11/2023, the Warden wrote to students explaining that Goldsmiths is looking at a shortfall on the budget they have planned for this academic year, and that the leadership team at Goldsmiths is working to develop and deliver an action plan to overcome this shortfall.

In the above mentioned letter the Warden stated that "We are absolutely committed to ensuring that these financial challenges do not impact students' learning or time at Goldsmiths, and I want to give you my assurance that you will continue to receive all opportunities promised to you when you chose to study with us."

Goldsmiths has since announced to all staff that they are facing a £14.2 million shortfall on their planned budget, and they need to reduce their operating budget by £20 million to establish a new financial baseline for the College.

Goldsmiths has also introduced 6 workstreams which are responsible for delivering the transformation programme.

In a motion passed by GUCU on 10/11/2023, it is stated that "For any proposals and solutions to be effective, senior management must seek to engage – through active consultation, participation and input – all stakeholders across the Goldsmiths community. Engagement is contingent upon clear and consistent communication at all stages (particularly 'high level' preliminary stages) of proposal development."

The SU is Currently in the process of circulating a Survey to students to hear their specific demands and ideas on the transformation programme.

### **This Union Believes:**

At Goldsmiths, it is widely understood that our community stands for and with an unwavering commitment to a vibrant, inclusive, transformational and holistic educational experience.

Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in the history of our College due to severe and urgent issues with our financial position, leading to the development of an operational restructure with the necessity of immediate execution within this academic year. This endeavour has the potential to dramatically reshape the landscape of our institution causing an upheaval of the



core values and historical legacy of Goldsmiths, placing a disproportionate burden on students, staff, and academic quality.

### **This Unione Resolves:**

Based on student feedback and the SU's perspective in terms of securing student rights and wellbeing, we present the following demands. We request that the following be approved and prioritised within plans to mitigate the financial position of the College and/or 'transform' the College. We also ask that The College recognises its commitment to students in terms of student experience, rights and outcomes, as well as staff rights, and does not deem these demands in any way 'too low level' to be critical and important:

1. Extenuating circumstances of a minimum 7 working days be made automatically applicable twice per term to every student until the end of the 2024/25 Academic Year.
  - a.
2. Enhanced support framework for marginalised groups, including weekly (or at least bi-weekly) special drop in stations in RHB and PSH buildings staffed by representatives from the following, with potential collaboration with the SU:
  - a. Wellbeing Service
  - b. Library Subject Librarians
  - c. Careers Service
  - d. Immigration Service
  - e. School Hubs and Registry
3. Open access to free academic resources, including subject librarian sessions, research materials, and facilities/laboratories, even if changes in department structures occur. Including some resources and content from CALL, so students do not have to pay for it.
4. Financial adjustments and/or compensations for students who may experience delays in their academic progression due to structural changes.
5. Create emergency funds to assist students who face unforeseen financial challenges due to structural changes, such as unexpected relocation expenses or technology needs for remote learning, available to international students as well. An emergency funds committee should be set up that is responsible for reviewing Students' applications and the review process should not take more than 10 working days.
6. Allow students and alumni to complain up to 1.5 years after graduation.
7. Establish a formative essay and assessment guidance for all modules as this is crucial especially for first years/international students in understanding how to write university accepted essays.
8. Commit to a full transparent review of Student Appeals processes with student



consultation embedded into the review.

9. Implement the edits suggested by the SU in [response to the proposed Student Protection Plan \(SPP\) 2024](#).
10. The College should take on board additional actions requested by students in their response to the survey as long as they are reasonably practicable, while also publicly committing to transparency and meaningful consultation with the SU and GUCU throughout the entire transformation program process.

The Student Union will promote a boycott of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 if the above demands are not met by Goldsmiths as a matter of urgency. This may include:

1. Refusing to promote the NSS or have any pro-NSS material on SU grounds or with the SU logo on;
2. Working with UCU to discourage academics from promoting the NSS and to encourage them to actively inform students about the boycott; creating and promoting materials, such as posters, leaflets, and social media content, aimed at discouraging student participation in the NSS throughout the period that it's open.



## **Committee Roles Election Motion**

### **The Union Notes:**

1. The Societies Handbook states that the roles of Secretary, President and Treasurer must be elected, yet this is not always adhered to.
2. The Societies Handbook also states that elected committees are then able to appoint other roles.
3. There is currently no regulation when it comes to the committee selection process, and various societies bypass elections entirely.
4. As the handbook is outdated, there is also currently no clear distinction between “committee roles” and “additional roles”.

### **The Union Believes:**

1. We are “led by students at every level,” and that the Student Voice is of the utmost importance. We want to give power to students by allowing them choice in who leads them.
2. Elections ensure a fair and democratic process when choosing new committee members.
3. The risk of bias and preferential treatment is reduced significantly when the process is a public vote.
4. Student Leaders hold power within the student community, and their elections should be treated with equal importance as the Officer elections.

### **The Union Resolves:**

1. All committee roles should be voted upon, to ensure a fair and democratic process.
2. To do consultation work with student groups to determine which roles constitute “committee roles” and which are considered to be “additional roles”.
3. Students in “additional roles” will have to complete Student Leader training when they are appointed.