

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

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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 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

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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>

<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/>

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.
- 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.

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<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>

- 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.
- 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.

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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/>

<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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