

Founding statement of the Professors' Forum

We founded a Professors' Forum at Goldsmiths on March 5th, 2020. The initial founding group now numbers more than 80 professors. (*Cf. Annex 1*)

We established the Forum specifically in response to the complete lack of consultation with staff over the introduction of the *Evolving Goldsmiths* restructure plan. We are opposed to a mode of governance that does not recognise and include the diverse experiences of all staff in responding to current challenges.

We acknowledge concern that a Professors' Forum might seem divisive to some people. However, we are determined to establish a platform which would mobilise our experience of academic life both inside and beyond Goldsmiths and reflect our lengthy investment in the institution and our extensive knowledge of its working practices.

We call on both SMT and Council to meet with us in order to have a sustained discussion of the following points.

Finances

We demand the 'radical transparency' you have promised about the state of Goldsmiths' finances. This should include comprehensive data concerning:

- student targets
- income
- expenditure
- capital investment

We believe that the proposed restructure does not address our financial challenges and that the new Executive Dean positions, the Enterprise Hub and IT expenditure are costly and will only add to the deficit. We also believe that, given the opportunity to engage in meaningful analysis, consultation and collaboration, we can use existing structures to improve Goldsmiths' financial position without the need for redundancies and cuts to our curriculum.

Governance

We do not recognise the legitimacy of our current governance structures as they appear to marginalise meaningful consultation and rely instead on unsubstantiated statements about irreversible decisions. There is strong disagreement about the diminishing roles for Departmental Business Managers and Heads of Department as well as the need to recruit additional layers of senior management. Both increasing centralisation and increasing SMT costs are unacceptable and we demand that the new appointments of senior pro-wardens be halted immediately.

Research

Research is not an afterthought or a mere budget item. It is at the heart of Goldsmiths' culture and the reason for its global reputation. The exhortation to strengthen research is an empty one given the fact that our research infrastructure (Research Office and

Research Finance) has been unable to perform effectively for the past decade due to management failure. We need to see a commitment to research – and not a conflation of it with enterprise – at the heart of any attempt to restructure the institution.

Alternative plan for short term goals

We recognise the need to collaborate over curriculum development and how best how to reshape the academic offering in order to retain, and where appropriate, to recruit additional students. However, we refuse to join the proposed EG workstreams that are designed to consider new curricular offerings without a full consultation on the strategic position of the University. We acknowledge the need for change – for a refreshed offer, for new branding strategies and for sustained efforts at student retention – but this will not be achieved by hasty and uninformed gestures. Successful change will have to be delivered as the result of coordinated and inclusive cross-departmental work.

Reputation

We are deeply disturbed by the simplistic economic model at the heart of the EG proposals and believe that it will cause reputational damage. We are also concerned by the failure to recognise what Goldsmiths' true cultural capital is and how to play to its strengths. For us this is not a case of resting on our laurels but of strengthening the core values of our institutional culture.

We demand the suspension of *Evolving Goldsmiths* and urgent meetings with both SMT and Council so that we can work together, and not in opposition, to secure the best future for Goldsmiths.

*Signed,
The Professors' Forum group
London, 10 Mar. 20*

Encl.:

Annex 1: Professors' Forum roster

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