04 2024

Open Letter: In Solidarity with Goldsmiths University

Goldsmiths as we know it will cease to exist if we do not protect it.

Students at Goldsmiths University

Goldsmiths University's Senior Management Team intends to carry out another significant restructure to be implemented by October 2024. This comes at a worrying speed, and without information and consultation with those affected, including staff, students and researchers.

The Transformation Programme aims to restructure the departmental organisation dramatically, affecting departments and staff dedicated to the humanities. It seeks to significantly reduce the portfolio of programmes and modules offered at the moment by restructuring the Academic Departments from 3 schools and 18 departments to 2 faculties and 8 schools. This comes just two years after the last restructure, in which the university saw the Student Centre dissolved and Departmental Professional Services staff dismissed to form three School Hubs. Both of these, since being implemented, have caused extensive issues within the University.

On Thursday 28 February 2024, senior management served campus trade unions notice of their intention to make compulsory redundancies equivalent to 130 full time academic positions which places over 300 faculty members at risk of redundancy in a University that employs 644 academic staff members. The proposed redundancies are targeted to 11 departments, reducing the staffing in each department, in terms of FTE (full time equivalent post) by: Sociology - 54%, History - 50%, English and Creative Writing (ECW) - 42%, Educational Studies - 39%, Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies (STaCS) - 38%, Music - 35%, Visual Cultures - 31%, Psychology - 31%, Anthropology - 28%, Politics and International Relations (P&IR) - 21%, Theatre and Performance (TaP) - 17%.

The magnitude of the proposed changes, the pace at which it is being undertaken, and the completely predictable disastrous effect it will have on students and the Goldsmiths community makes evident that the college is placing financial interests over those of students and the community. As a result, both students and faculty staff are already being forced to quit their studies and work positions altogether. Academic and professional development are seriously undermined by this decision, with faculty members seeing their careers severed, and PhDs and students across all programs incapable of starting one.

This is an attack on the production of knowledge in disguise as an economic recovery plan, which, placed in the bigger picture of restructures across universities in the UK, makes clear that it responds to the generalised desire of making universities corporate machines.

The undersigned agree that this is not just a problem for Goldsmiths, but for the whole education sector. It is the entire

academic community that is threatened by this decision, as the knowledge generated at Goldsmiths University exists within a global knowledge production, and the on-going commodification of higher education. What is already in action in the UK may be on its way to other countries.

We therefore stand in solidarity with the Goldsmiths community, staff and students affected, and demand that the so-called "transformation programme" is reversed/re-negotiated, a process that must include the academic community and the unions.

Sign the Open Letter: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRAvgVwYKidEqZVu9dFzI5lM15fHXViTZFNN5HiOkkDmcJSA/viewform