UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Minutes of the 91st meeting of Council held at 4pm on Monday 11 December 2023 in the Oak Suite, Elm Grove, Digby Stuart College

Present: Phil Walker (Chair), Mark Allen*, Dr Aleata Alstad-Calkins, Dr Priscilla Chadwick[1], Janet Cooper, Jennifer Coupland, Dr Mari Cruice, Lindsey Doud, Sr Christine Edwards, Prof Jean-Noël Ezingeard, Dennis Hone, Amy Hopkins, Revd Dr Tim Macquiban*, Ruth Martin*, David Sharkey[2], Revd Canon Dr Jennifer Smith, Kevin Thomas

Secretary: Dr George Turner

Notes: Elaine Lentell

Apologies: Prof Sunitha Narendran, Michael Pearson

In attendance: Dr Kevin Chalmers,[3] Prof Anna Gough-Yates, Prof Melanie Gray,[4] Liam Hurley, Ian Pleace, Tom Rowson, Dean Stokes

* *Attended the meeting remotely via MS Teams*

Regular Business Matters, Minutes and Reports

1. Welcomes, introductions, apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting, in particular:

- Dr Mari Cruice and Lindsey Doud, who were attending their first meeting.
- Professor Melanie Gray, Dean of the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, and Dr Kevin Chalmers, Deputy Dean (Computer Sciences), who were attending to present Item 6.
- Dean Stokes, Strategy Advisor, who was attending to present Item 11.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 A declaration of Interest was noted and explained for one Council member.

2.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

3. Notification of Any Other Business

3.1 The Following additional items of business were noted:

[1] Joined the meeting from Item 6.
[2] Left after Item 11.
[3/4] Attended for Item 6 only.

3.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3.3 Council **approved** the extensions of the following Council Members' terms:

- David Sharkey for a 2nd term from 18 Dec 2023 to 17 Dec 2026
- Kevin Thomas for a 3rd term from 17 May 2024 to 16 May 2027

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the 90th meeting of Council, which was held on 9 October 2023 (Paper RUC91/1), were **confirmed** and Council **approved** the redactions for the published minutes as highlighted.

5. Chair's action/ Items approved by electronic circulation

5.1 Council noted the items approved by electronic circulation since the last meeting as detailed in Paper RUC91/2.

Strategic Reports and Items

6. Presentation on Computing Courses

6.1 Council received a presentation on developments in the School of Computing from the Dean of AHSS, Prof Melanie Gray, and Deputy Dean (Computer Sciences), Dr Kevin Chalmers.

6.2 Council thanked Professor Gray and Dr Chalmers for a highly informative presentation, congratulated them for the development of the portfolio and achievements, including the focus on student outcomes, and wished them well with the planned initiatives.

7. Chair's Items

7.1 There were no items to report.

8. Vice-Chancellor's Report

8.1 Council received the Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper RUC91/3), and noted the following points in particular:

Sustainability

Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

Student Education

a) That the range of initiatives introduced in 2023/24 to boost student attendance and engagement, as detailed on page 27 of the report, were showing positive results. As of 31 November over 3,100 students had recorded an average attendance of over 80%. There had also been a significant improvement in year-on-year average attendance.

b) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Research and Knowledge Exchange

c) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9. Students' Union Report

9.1 Council noted the contents of the report (Paper RUC91/4), including the following.

9.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9.3 Recruitment for a new financial trustee closed on 30 November without any suitable candidates coming forward. This would be revisited with potential agency support in December.

9.4 That the RSU had held its first Presidents' Committee on 21 November 2023, where students were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the issues discussed.

10. Performance Dashboard update

10.1 Council received the paper and updated dashboard (Paper RUC91/5). The following points were highlighted:

10.2 That due to the development of the new strategic plan, the dashboard was in the process of being revised and would be presented to Council in its updated format at future meetings.

10.3 That metrics would continue to form an integral part of the new dashboard. It was acknowledged that since their inception some of the KPIs had lost their relevance due to changes in how some data was compiled nationally (e.g. employability), policy, regulation and the recent changes in the University's structure. These changes would therefore be reflected in the development of KPIs in the new Strategic Plan.

11. Update on Strategy Development

11.1 Council received an update on the University's new strategic plan 2024-2030 (Paper RUC91/6) and the following points in particular were noted:

11.2 That since July 2023 over 400 staff and students had taken part in the listening exercise (now complete) and had provided valuable feedback. Regular engagement with staff, students and external partners would continue until the strategy's launch in March 2024.

11.3 Council discussed the SWOT analysis at Annex 2 of the paper and the following suggestions were made:

- Consider carrying out SWOT analysis on University employees.
- In the final iteration, ensure that the link between vision, mission and strategy is expressed simply for ease of communication.

Action: Strategy Advisor

12. Evolving our Business Model to embed sustainability

12.1 In the context of the development of the University Strategy, Council received a paper setting out the external challenges faced by the UK higher education sector and the subsequent risks to the University's financial position (Paper RUC91/7), and the following points were highlighted:

12.2 That achieving growth would become more challenging in the next few years due to the demand and supply-side challenges detailed on page 57 of the paper. To address this five strategic initiatives were in development:

- Teaching delivery and academic structures
- Professional services
- Pension scheme optimisation
- Non-pay
- Growth development

12.3 Council discussed the initiatives and noted the importance of them aligning with the University's new strategic plan. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

Items for discussion and/or approval

13. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

13.1 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

13.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

13.3 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Five-year Financial Forecast

13.4 Council received the Q1 reforecast and updated 5-year forecast (Paper RUC91/8). The following points were noted in particular:

13.5 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

13.6 Council **approved** the five-year forecast for submission to the Office for Students as part of the Annual Financial Return (AFR).

14. Going Concern Report

14.1 Council received the Going Concern report (Paper RUC91/9) and noted the contents therein.

14.2 Council **approved** the going concern report, which had been recommended for approval by the Audit Committee.

15. Audit Committee Annual Report including the Internal Auditors' Annual Report

15.1 Council received the Audit Committee Annual Report and associated submissions (Paper RUC91/10), which had also been provided to the Vice-Chancellor in line with University regulations.

15.2 Council noted that the report confirmed the view of the Committee that the work of internal and external audit throughout the year to 31 July 2023 was satisfactory. The report also confirmed the opinion of the internal auditors that they can provide satisfactory assurance that the University has adequate and effective arrangements in place regarding risk management, control and governance; sustainability, economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and the management and quality assurance of data submitted to HESA, the Student Loans Company, the Office for Students, Research England and other bodies.

15.3 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

15.4 Council agreed that, overall, the Committee was able to conclude that, based on the information presented to it, the University had adequate and effective arrangements in place regarding the matters detailed above and agreed that the report be duly signed by the Chair of Audit Committee.

Action: Secretary

16. External Audit Report

16.1 Council received the External Audit Report for the year ended 31 July 2023 (Paper RUC91/11).

16.2 Council was assured that the outstanding matters were in the process of being completed, and that a finalised report would be presented to Audit Committee at an additional meeting on 22 December 2023.

17. Letter of Representation

17.1 Council received the letter of representation (Paper RUC91/12) and noted that it would be approved at the additional online Council meeting arranged to approve the annual accounts.

18. Annual Report and Financial Statements

18.1 Council received and discussed the annual report and financial statements (Paper RUC91/13), noting that they would be approved at an additional online Council meeting.

19. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000

19.1 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

19.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000
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Action: Secretary

20. UKVI update

20.1 Council received the update on UKVI (Paper RUC91/15) and noted the contents therein.

Committee reports

21. Council Committees

21.1 Audit Committee

a) Council received the report from the Chair of the Audit Committee (Paper RUC91/16).

b) Council **approved** the proposed changes to the strategic risk register as set out in the report (Strategic Risk Register provided at Appendix 1).

c) Council further **approved** the revised Risk Management Policy (provided at Appendix 2).

21.2 Health, Safety and Welfare Committee

a) Council received the report from the Chair of the Health, Safety & Welfare Committee (Paper RUC91/17).

b) Council **approved** the revised Fire Safety Policy (provided at Appendix 1).

c) Council further **approved** the revised Health and Safety Policy, retitled ‘Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy’ (provided at Appendix 2).

d) Council received an update on the intrusive inspection of buildings on the University estate, conducted to ascertain whether any contained reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). It was confirmed that no RAAC concrete was found to be present and that no further investigation was required.

21.3 Remuneration Committee

a) Council received a verbal update from the Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

b) Council noted that the following items were considered at the meeting on 13 November 2023, in particular:

- The CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code.
- The Vice-Chancellor (pay and performance) (*Vice-Chancellor not in attendance at the Remuneration Committee for this item*).
- Senior Team pay and performance (Vice-Chancellor's direct reports).

22. University Senate

22.1 Council received the Senate report and noted the contents therein (Paper RUC91/18), from which Council received assurance that the University was continuing to deliver improvements to support student outcomes, with a focus on continuation and engagement supported by the Engagement and Attendance dashboard. Attention was now turned to the National Student Survey (NSS) 2024, which would launch on 22 January 2024.

22.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Other items for information

23. Any Other Business

23.1 Council noted that an additional online meeting would be arranged in late December/early January to approve the annual accounts once they had been finalised.

Signed: Phil Walker

………………………………. Date: 18.03.2024

Phil Walker, Chair of Council

Minutes prepared by:
Elaine Lentell, Governance Manager, December 2023

Roehampton, Council (11 December 2023)

Items approved