University of Roehampton London

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON COUNCIL

Minutes of the 94th meeting of Council held at 4pm on Monday 1 July 2024 in the Oak Suite, Elm Grove, Digby Stuart College and remotely via Teams

Present:	Phil Walker (Chair), Dr Priscilla Chadwick, Jennifer Coupland, Dr Mari Cruice, Lindsey Doud, Tamsin Eastwood, Prof Jean-Noël Ezingeard, Dennis Hone, Revd Dr Tim Macquiban,[1] Ruth Martin, Prof Sunitha Narendran, Michael Pearson, Mohammad Imran Shafiqi, David Sharkey, Revd Canon Dr Jennifer Smith,[2] Kevin Thomas
Secretary:	Dr George Turner
Apologies:	Mark Allen, Dr Aleata Alstad-Calkins, Sr Christine Edwards, Liam Hurley
In attendance:	Michael Bailey,[3] Prof Anna Gough-Yates, Andy Lamb[4], Ian Pleace, Leigh Robinson[5], Tom Rowson, Rachael Stone

Regular Business Matters, Minutes and Reports

1. Welcomes, introductions, apologies

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

- Tamsin Eastwood and Mohammad Imran Shafiqi, who were attending their first meeting of Council.
- Professor Leigh Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Education), who attended to present Item 11.
- Andy Lamb, Executive Director of Human Resources, who attended as part of Item 17.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

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

3. Notification of Any Other Business

3.1 There was no additional business.

[1] Withdrew from the meeting for Item 12, left the meeting midway through Item 17.
[2] Withdrew from the meeting for Item 12.
[3] Joined the meeting for Item 8 only.
[4] Joined the meeting for Item 17 only.
[5] Joined the meeting for Item 11 only.

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the 93rd meeting of Council and the additional formal meeting held during the Council Away Day, which were held on 18 March 2024 and 9 May 2024 respectively (Paper RUC94/1), were **confirmed** and Council **approved** the redactions to the published minutes as highlighted.

5. Matters arising

5.1 Council noted the matters arising as set out in Paper RUC94/3.

Strategic Reports and Items

6. Chair's Items

6.1 There were no items to report.

7. Vice-Chancellor's Report

7.1 Council received the Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper RUC94/3) and an additional presentation in the meeting, and noted the following points in particular:

7.2 That the University had reached the end of the academic year in a strong position in relation to a number of external markers and internal lead indicators of student success.

7.3 That the continued real-terms erosion in the value of the regulated home undergraduate tuition fee was having a significant impact on the financial sustainability of the University and the sector as a whole.

7.4 That there were four elements to the policy outlook for higher education after the general election, namely the government position on regulated fees, the general discourse and mood around higher education, the government position on international recruitment, and potential structural reform. The policy position of a Labour government was unlikely to ease the financial pressures facing the sector in the short term, although it was clear that Labour intended to shift the discourse around HE to a more positive tone, potentially resulting in an upside of applications from the UK and overseas in the medium term.

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

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

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

8. Students' Union Report

8.1 Council welcomed Michael Bailey, Chief Executive of Roehampton Students' Union, who attended for this item to support the RSU President in his presentation.

8.2 Council noted the contents of the report (Paper RUC94/4), and noted the following points in particular:

8.3 That the RSU budget, which had previously been agreed by the Finance & Resources Committee, anticipated a small surplus being delivered.

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

8.5 Council noted the survey responses in Appendix A of the report and the relatively high number of undecided respondents. It was noted that targeting this group was a communications objective for the RSU going forward.

8.6 Council asked about how the RSU was targeting students who do not come to campus often, noting from previous reports that this is an important demographic. It was noted that this was an area of strategic focus for the RSU, which was currently relatively undeveloped. A key initiative was to improve the way that academic representation functions to ensure that student feedback on their academic experience is effectively captured.

9. Strategy 2030: Final Approval[6]

9.1 Council received the final draft of the University's new strategic plan (Paper RUC94/5).

9.2 Council noted that the Vice-Chancellor had delivered a session prior to the meeting outlining the strategy in more detail, including the strategic shifts that had occurred since 2019 and were being planned. The session was a repeat of a session delivered at the Council Away Day in May 2024, for those who were unable to attend the Away Day.

9.3 Council noted that publication of the strategy was subject to minor amendments to the wording of the document. A balanced scorecard of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) was currently being development and would be presented to Council for review and approval at its October 2024 meeting.

9.4 Subject to the above, Council **approved** the Strategy 2030 and thanked the University's leadership team, including in particular the Executive Director of Strategy & External Engagement, Liam Hurley, for the significant effort that had gone into its development.

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

[6] Taken after Item RUC94.10.

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

11. Access and Participation Plan: Proposed objectives, targets and interventions

11.1 Council received the proposed objectives, targets and interventions that would form the basis of the University's next Access and Participation Plan (Paper RUC94/7).

11.2 It was noted that the approach set out in the paper reflected the published OfS guidance on new access and participation plans and the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). The proposal represented a more focussed approach than had been taken by the University under previous plans.

11.3 It was noted that the proposals were the product of consultation with staff and students. The targets set out in the paper were stretch targets. They were designed to be challenging but achievable for the University and fair to students.

11.4 Council noted the analysis which concluded that a focus on supporting Black Male students and students entering the University with technical qualifications would yield the greatest benefit. It was noted however, that the interventions proposed would need to be sufficiently personalised to avoid unintended negative perceptions from students in these groups. It was also noted that these interventions would sit within the context of a broader support system that all students would benefit from.

11.5 Council noted that the OfS would also need to approve the proposals before they would come into effect.

11.6 Subject to the above, Council **approved** the proposed objectives, targets and interventions to form the basis of the University's next Access and Participation Plan.

11.7 Council thanked the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Professor Leigh Robinson, for the work conducted so far and quality of the paper.

12. Mount Clare Update

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

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

13. Revised Whistleblowing Policy

13.1 Council approved the revised Whistleblowing Policy as set out in Paper RUC94/8.

14. Scheme of Delegation

14.1 Council approved the Scheme of Delegation as set out in Paper RUC94/9.

Committee reports

15. Council Committees

15.1 Audit Committee

a) Council received the report from the Chair of the Audit Committee (Paper RUC94/10).

b) Council noted that no changes were being proposed to the overall categorisation of the risks, but that two changes to the scoring and two changes to the forward projection were proposed as set out in the paper. Council noted that good progress was being made on the planned mitigating actions in the strategic risk register.

c) Council **approved** the proposed changes to the strategic risk register as set out in Appendix 1 of the paper.

d) Council noted that a deep dive had been conducted into Risk A1 on the basis of a paper from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and that the three internal audits reported during the most recent period (as set out in the paper) had provided satisfactory assurance.

15.2 Finance and Resources Committee

a) Council received the report from the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee (Paper RUC94/11).

b) Council noted that most of the significant items set out in the report had been covered elsewhere on the agenda. It was noted the Committee had received a comprehensive update on the University's environmental sustainability work and the significant progress that had been made in this regard by the new team that had been appointed.

15.3 Health, Safety and Welfare Committee

a) Council received the report from the Chief Operating Officer, in the absence of the Chair of the Health, Safety & Welfare Committee (Paper RUC94/12).

b) Council noted in particular that at the last meeting the Committee had approved minor changes to several policies, that it had held a useful discussion on the implications of the High Court judgement in *The University of Bristol vs Dr Robert Abrahart* and had received an external compliance report from Uniac following the Elm Grove fire in February 2023.

c) Council noted that the Committee had welcomed a new external member, Richard Bradshaw, who thus far had proved to be very effective.

16. University Senate

16.1 Council received the report from the Vice-Chancellor as Chair of the University Senate (Paper RUC94/13).

16.2 Council noted in particular Paragraph 1.2 of the report, which summarised temporary changes to the University's Academic Regulations to allow earlier attempts at resits by students. In approving the proposal, Senate had ensured that there would be no negative impact on academic standards as the assessment itself would not change, merely the timing. It was noted that the impact of the interim change would be reviewed during the summer of

2024 and consideration given to making it permanent if a positive impact on student outcomes was evident.

17. Remuneration Committee

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

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

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

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

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

Farewells and thanks

It was noted that this was Revd Dr Tim Macquiban's last meeting of Council following his decision to step down. Council gave its thanks to Revd Dr Macquiban for his service to the University and Southlands College during his tenure and wished him well for the future.

Phil Walker

Signed: ………………………………. Date: 14.10.24
Phil Walker, Chair of Council