

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON COUNCIL

Minutes of the 96th meeting of Council held at 4pm on Monday 14 October 2024 in Room 107 Mandela Building, Digby Stuart College and MS Teams

- Present: Phil Walker (Chair), Mark Allen, Dr Priscilla Chadwick, Jennifer Coupland¹, Dr Mari Cruice, Dr Aleata Alstad-Calkins, Lindsey Doud, Sr Christine Edwards, Professor Jean-Noël Ezingear, Ruth Martin, Professor Sunitha Narendran, Michael Pearson, Imran Shafiqi, David Sharkey, Kevin Thomas²
- Secretary: Dr George Turner
- Apologies: Tamsin Eastwood, Dennis Hone, Revd Canon Dr Jennifer Smith
- In attendance: Professor Jane Longmore (incoming Vice-Chair), Catherine Beeby-Mills³, Liam Hurley, Richard Keogh, Ian Pleace, Leigh Robinson⁴, Tom Rowson, Claire Sherer (minutes)

Regular Business Matters, Minutes and Reports

1. Welcomes, introductions, apologies

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

- Professor Jane Longmore who was observing the meeting before taking up her role as Vice-Chair of Council later in the year;
- Richard Keogh who was attending his first meeting since taking on his new role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Commercial); and
- Claire Sherer, Interim Governance Manager.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 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.

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the 94th and 95th meetings of Council held on 1 July 2024 and 29 July 2024 respectively (Paper RUC94/01), were **confirmed** and Council **approved** the redactions to the published minutes as highlighted and that the full minutes of 29 July 2024 would be reserved from publication.

¹ In attendance for Items 1 to 11 only.

² In attendance for Items 1 to 11 only.

³ Joined the meeting for Item 14 only.

⁴ Joined the meeting for Item 12 only.

5. Matters arising

- 5.1 Council noted the matters arising as set out in Paper RUC96/02.

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 RUC96/03) and noted that:

- 7.2 **Policy environment:** A new Labour government has brought a more positive rhetoric around Higher Education, but there are no immediate answers to the sector's financial challenges.

- 7.3 **Sustainability:** The sector, especially lower tariff institutions, is continuing to experience considerable volatility in terms of student recruitment, whilst also starting to see the impact of the cost of living on attrition. Modelling has shown the particular impact on fee income for English lower tariff universities. The current picture for September has evolved since the last meeting of Council and subsequent email updates, driven by improvements in international recruitment, and a stronger than expected Clearing.

- 7.4 **Student Education:** The University saw real success in the National Student Survey and is now 8th in England by Overall Positivity Measure. Assessment pass rates have also been positive, indicating good continuation and completion rates. Work to implement a new curriculum framework has begun.

- 7.5 **Research and Engagement:** £6.7m was achieved in grant capture in 2023/24 and 2024/25 has seen a strong start to the year, with 5 bids awarded to date. The KEF has seen Roehampton increase its results across two metrics but decrease across two others.

- 7.6 **Media activity and events:** A number of the University's researchers have received positive media attention over the summer months. More than 2,500 students graduated across seven ceremonies in September 2024.

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

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

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

8. Students' Union Report

8.1 The recently elected President of the Students' Union gave Members a brief overview of his background. Council then received the Students' Union Report (Paper RUC96/04) and noted the following points in particular:

- improved financial performance, ending the financial year with c. £70k surplus against an expected £8k deficit;
- the appointment of four new trustees to the Board for ratification at the President's Committee on 17 October 2024;
- the formal adoption of the new Freedom of Speech Code of Practice following University Council approval in July 2024;
- the transition to a new service model of academic representation aimed at removing barriers to engagement, improving quality of data and creating near real-time feedback. In addition, subject area representatives would be replacing programme representatives.

8.2 In response to questions from Members of Council, it was confirmed that a coordinator would be appointed to oversee and moderate student feedback; and that there had been dedicated events for off-campus students as part of the Freshers' Fair.

8.3 Council thanked the President for the excellent report and for the positive movement on the Union finances including the introduction of smaller welcome events for student intakes throughout the year and the move away from an over-reliance on the night-time economy prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. Director of Finance's Report

9.1 Council received the Director of Finance's Report (Paper RUC96/05) which provided updates on:

- the provisional view on the year end outturn;
- Lloyds loan covenants;
- the latest view of September 2024 recruitment;
- monthly cash flow forecast;
- debtors; and
- sector finances.

9.2 Further to the report, Council noted that a full set of financial statements would be presented in December 2024.

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

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9.5 The Vice-Chancellor concluded the discussion by summarising the original position and all the steps taken to ensure robust financial practices were in place for the future.

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11. Professional Services Homeworker Model

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12. Student Education Update

12.1 Council noted the Student Education Update (Paper RUC96/08) which focused on work carried out in relation to four key aspects of student education in the 2023/24 academic year: the National Student Survey, progress with Continuation, the Graduate Outcomes Survey, and the introduction of a new academic framework.

12.2 With regards to the Graduate Outcomes Survey, it was noted that significant work had gone into driving up responses prior to the survey. An initial review of continuation rates looked positive, and Council would be presented with the data once it was available.

12.3 Council extended its thanks to the PVC (Student Education, the Academic Registrar and the Schools for their hard work in this area.

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

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14. Strategy 2030 Performance Framework Update

14.1 Council received an update on the Strategy 2030 Performance Framework as set out in Paper RUC96/10 which showcased the new Strategy 2030 performance measures dashboard, and the first performance measures highlight report.

14.2 Council welcomed the improved approach and looked forward to reviewing the finalised set of performance measures and reporting approach at a subsequent meeting.

Committee reports

15. Council Committees

15.1 Audit Committee

- a) Council received the report from the Chair of the Audit Committee (Paper RUC96/11) which was presented by the David Sharkey in the absence of the Chair of the Audit Committee.
- b) Council approved the Strategic Risk Register and, in doing so, noted:
 - three new risks are added to the register;
 - one change in risk description; and
 - changes made to the risk level/scoring of some risks including one increased risk moving from risk score 12 to 16.

15.2 Finance and Resources Committee

- a) Council noted the report from the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee (Paper RUC96/12).

15.3 Nominations and Governance Committee

- a) Council approved the appointment of Mark Allen as a member of Council for a third term running from 18 March 2025 to 17 March 2028 which also included his continuation as a Member of the Finance & Resources Committee and Chair of the Health, Safety & Welfare Committee; and
- b) Council noted the extension of Sheena Pindoria's term as a member of the Audit Committee until 31 July 2025, including that the extension had been made as an extraordinary arrangement outside the provisions of the University Regulations, but was agreed on a pragmatic basis to support continuity of the Committee's work.

16. University Senate

- 16.1 Council received the report from the Vice-Chancellor as Chair of the University Senate (Paper RUC96/14).

17. Annual Schedule of Council Business

- 17.1 Council noted the Annual Schedule of Business for 2024-25 as set out in Paper RUC96/15.

Farewells and thanks

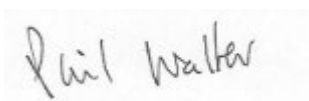
On behalf of Council, the Chair offered his words of thanks to Liam Hurley, the University's outgoing Executive Director of Strategy and External Relations, noting:

- his loyalty and hard work during his 18.5 years at Roehampton in a variety of roles;

- that he was well respected both across the University community and with external stakeholders; and
- his successful and impactful career at Roehampton, including his recent very successful leadership of the University's growth and diversification of income.

Council Members seconded the thanks and wished Liam all the best in the future.

Signed:



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Phil Walker, Chair of Council

Date: 09.12.24