

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON
COUNCIL

**Minutes of the 82nd meeting of Council held at 4pm on 14 March 2022
in the Oak Suite, Elm Grove, Digby Stuart College and via MS Teams**

- Present: Phil Walker (Chair), Farrah Black, Dr Christine Carpenter¹, Dr Priscilla Chadwick, Janet Cooper, Jennifer Coupland, Prof Ann R. David, Sr Christine Edwards, Prof Jean-Noël Ezingard, Dennis Hone, Sheena Pindoria, David Sharkey², Revd Canon Dr Jennifer Smith, Kevin Thomas
- Secretary: Dr George Turner
- Notes: Elaine Lentell
- Apologies: Mark Allen, Jordan Kenny, Revd Dr Tim Macquiban, Dr Sacha Powell
- In attendance: Prof Anna Gough-Yates, Dr Stephen Driver³, Baljit Kaur, Liam Hurley, Tom Rowson

Regular Business Matters, Minutes and Reports

1. Welcomes, introductions, apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting, in particular Christine Carpenter, newly appointed Member of Council nominated by the Society of the Sacred Heart, who was attending her first meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were declared.

3. Notification of Any Other Business

- 3.1 It was agreed that any other business would be discussed at the end of the meeting.

4. Minutes

- 4.1 Council noted that the minutes from the 81st meeting of Council on 28 February 2022 would be circulated by email following the meeting and then presented for approval at Council on 28 April 2022.

¹ Attended the meeting via MS Teams

² Attended the meeting via MS Teams

³ Attended for item 12

5. Presentation on the School of Arts

- 5.1 Council received a presentation on the School of Arts from the school's recently appointed Dean, Professor Alan Murray.
- 5.2 Council thanked Professor Murray for a highly informative presentation and wished him well with the planned initiatives. It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to members following the meeting.

Strategic Reports

6. Chair's Items

There were no items to report.

7. Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 7.1 Council received the Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper RUC82/1) and noted the following points in particular:

External Environment

- a) That a third round of industrial action by University and College Union (UCU) members had taken place across late February and early March. The UCU had since announced a further 10 days of industrial action, with 5 days planned for late March. However, it was anticipated that disruption to teaching would be relatively minimal, as with the previous strike action. Thanks were extended to union members and all staff ensuring that the impact of the industrial action on students was kept to a minimum.
- b) That UUK had suspended relations with the Russian Union of Rectors (RUR) following their statement in support of the invasion of Ukraine. The University was continuing to support all members of its community affected by the crisis, regardless of their nationality.

Sustainability

- c) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- d) That while September applications were higher than at the same time in 2021, acceptances were still lagging. The University was therefore working hard to ensure equally strong conversion. The September intake was also likely to see a further shift in the University's subject mix and an increase in international students.
- e) That the partnership with Croydon College continued to evolve, with a BSc in Children's Nursing scheduled to start in September 2022.

Student Education

- f) That the Student Engagement Team had run six call campaigns in the current year, aimed at reaching out to at-risk students with low engagement by offering additional support.

Research and Knowledge Exchange

- g) That to date, 2021/22 bid income was below target. However, the University was awaiting the outcome of 64 bids and a further 44 were in preparation.

8. Director of Finance's Report

- 8.1 Council received the report (Paper RUC82/2) and noted the following key points:

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

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

- 8.4 That the Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) loan had been paid in full at the maturity date of 8 March 2022.

- 8.5 Council noted that there had been a successful fraud attempt against the University. £42,000 was stolen as a result of a supplier's infrastructure being hacked. It was confirmed that the University would be covered for the loss by its insurance. The incident would be submitted to the Office for Students as a reportable event.

9. Students' Union Report

- 9.1 Council received and noted the contents of the President of the RSU's report (Paper RUC82/3), including the following:

- 9.2 That the external audit of the RSU accounts for the year ended 31 July 2021 had gone well, with no adjustments to the draft accounts requested nor any management actions recommended. RSU's Board of Trustees will review the external auditor arrangements with Goodman Jones over the summer.

- 9.3 That owing to the success of the period poverty campaign at the University, launched by the RSU President in 2020/21, the RSU planned to make a proposal to Student Senate to fund a further campaign.

- 9.4 That voting for the 2022 RSU annual elections would open shortly. There was a high number of nominations, with record numbers of international and postgraduate students standing.

Other items for discussion and/or approval

10. The Post-18 Education and Funding Review

- 10.1 Council received the paper (Paper RUC82/4), which provided an overview of the UK Government's proposals on reforming the post-18 education landscape. The following points were noted in particular:
- 10.2 That the tuition fee cap on home undergraduate students would be frozen at £9,250 for at least two years, up to and including 2024/25. The impact on the University had already been taken into account in its budget planning, as the assumption was that fees would remain capped at their current level.
- 10.3 That the reintroduction of student number controls (SNCs) was also being proposed. The proposal was at the consultation stage and details of what the SNCs would be based on had not yet been decided. The University was concentrating on the subject areas currently below the proposed OfS thresholds and would continue to focus on improving completion/ progression and graduate outcomes performance.

11. Appointment of Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor

- 11.1 Council received the Appointment of Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor paper (Paper RUC82/5).
- 11.2 Council thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair for providing introductions and overseeing the selection process, and **approved** the appointments.

12. Graduate Outcomes update

- 12.1 Council received the Graduate Outcomes paper (Paper RUC82/5) and noted the points below in particular:
- 12.2 That graduate outcomes was a strategic imperative for the University, and that the trajectory was positive, with both Business and Psychology seeing significant improvement.
- 12.3 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 12.4 That the career registration project would enable the University to better support students in relation to careers and employability. The intention was to offer as many students work experience as possible.
- 12.5 Council thanked the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) for the instructive update on the University's ongoing initiatives on improving student outcomes.

13. Gender Pay Gap Report

- 13.1 Council received the Gender Pay Gap Report (Paper RUC82/7) showing a median pay gap of zero and a mean pay gap of 6.3%.
- 13.2 Council noted the positive progress made on the gender pay gap and that the University was well ahead of the sector average.

Committee reports

14. Council Committees

14.1 Audit Committee

- a) Council received a verbal update from the Chair of the Audit Committee.
- b) Council noted that mandatory training rates had improved, with over 4,000 sessions completed in the last 12 months. It was anticipated that the 85% completion threshold would be achieved by August 2023.
- c) Council was advised that the Committee had reviewed the strategic risk register, and considered that the overall profile of four risks had changed owing to external factors and the planned acceleration of the Strategy Delivery Programme. These were:
 - A5 Student Satisfaction (increased to high)
 - A8 Student Outcomes (increased and still high)
 - E8 Government restructuring of initial teacher training provision (reduced but still medium)
 - N2 Supporting staff through a period of change (increased to high)
- d) Council **approved** the proposed changes to the high-level risk register, subject to it being circulated via email following the meeting.
- e) Council noted that the Committee had focussed its risk deep dive exercise on F8, closing the structural deficit, considering the external risks associated with the Strategy Delivery Programme. The Committee was assured that Management had made good progress securing the necessary resources and establishing project governance. A follow up meeting would be scheduled in a few weeks' time to review the ongoing risk profile.
- f) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- g) Council noted that the Committee had received an update from KCG on the internal audit schedule. KCG was on track and recently completed audits had all resulted in satisfactory or substantial assurance.
- h) Lastly, the Committee had given its sincere thanks to Stuart Kemp, who was resigning from KCG as Head of Internal Audit to take up a position as Chief Audit Officer at the Open University. Jeanine Marlow would be taking over as interim head while permanent plans were put in place.

Action: Secretary

14.2 Finance and Resources Committee

- a) Council received the Finance and Resources Committee Report (Paper RUC82/8).

- b) Council noted that the Committee had considered the draft Financial Sustainability Strategy. It was agreed that the Committee would monitor the strategy on an ongoing basis to retain oversight of the financial consequences. The Committee endorsed the strategy to be presented to Council on 28 February 2022.
- c) The Committee also received an update from the Executive Director of HR on the University's pensions liabilities. The proposals outlined in the paper were considered and endorsed for recommendation to Council.

14.3 Joint Honorary Awards Committee

- a) Council received the Joint Honorary Awards Committee report (Paper RUC82/9).
- b) Council **approved** the following recommendations for nominations for an honorary award of the University:

Minute withheld under Data Protection Act 2018.

Members of Council were asked to consider whether they could use their networks to facilitate contact with any of the above individuals.

14.4 Nominations and Governance Committee

- a) Council received the Nominations and Governance Committee report (Paper RUC82/10).
- b) Council received a verbal update from the Vice-Chair of Council on the appointment of the Professional Services Council member. The Committee had agreed to recommend to Council that Dr Aleata Alstad-Calkins, Director of Student Support Services, be appointed.
- c) Council noted that Aleata would be an excellent addition to Council and **approved** the appointment.

14.5 Remuneration Committee

- a) Council received a verbal update from the Chair of the Committee.
- b) Council noted that as the University had repaid the CCFF loan, pay increases could now be considered for senior staff whose roles were covered by the Committee.
- c) Council further noted that the Committee had updated the guidance on Senior Officers to bring the University in line with the CUC Code of Conduct.
- d) The Committee had also considered the recent industrial action by academic staff and the future vision of the University and its potential impact on staff.

15. University Senate

15.1 Council noted the Senate report (Paper RUC82/11), and that Senate had approved the proposal to re-establish the Senate sub-group to consider urgent changes to academic regulations between meetings, given the ongoing uncertainty in the external environment.

16. Student Senate

16.1 Council noted the contents of the Student Senate Report (Paper RUC82/12).

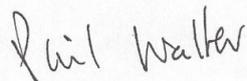
17. Committee Schedule for 2022-23

17.1 Council noted the provisional Council and Committee schedule, subject to the availability of members being confirmed in the next few weeks.

18. Any Other Business

18.1 Council members were reminded that it was Homelessness Awareness Week from 21 - 25 March. It was agreed that details of the initiative would be circulated to members outside of the Committee.

Signed:



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Phil Walker, Chair of Council

Date: 16 May 2022

Minutes prepared by:

Elaine Lentell, Senior Governance Officer, March 2022