

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON

STUDENT SENATE

Report on the Seventh Meeting of the University Student Senate, held on
Wednesday 14 November 2012 in the Convent Parlour at Digby Stuart College

- Present: Prof. Paul O'Prey, Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Wade Tomlinson, President of RSU; Hollie Abbott, Laurence Benson, Rachel Blaney, Reggie Blennerhassett, Prof. Pat Corcoran, Paul Dabell, Alina Dafinoui, Prof. Lynn Dobbs, Claire Fitzsimons, John Harvey, Michael James, Victoria Kindred, Anna Krettman, Emma Lear, Prof. Ann Maclarnon, Joyti Mahadra, Andy Masheter, Steve Molyneaux, Nurani Nathou, Francisco Nginamau, Michael Odd, Rhonda Lee Read, Henriette Saville, Rob Yeldham
- Secretary: Andrew Skinner (Deputy University Secretary)
- Apologies: Ben Anderson, Huw Cook, Ingrid Hetland, Dr Claire Ozanne, Matthew Taylor;
Louise Evans (Intern)
- Guests: Darin Akintola, Jon Carter, Steven Coates, Michael Diss (Student interns from RSU);
Susan Scorey (University Librarian);
Dr Ghaz Alwani-Starr (Director of Property & Facilities Management)

RSS07.1 Welcomes, and apologies for absence (Chair of the Student Senate)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed all present to the seventh meeting, and outlined the history of the Roehampton Student Senate, believed still to be unique in the Higher Education Sector, though other institutions are considering establishing similar meetings.

Professor O'Prey advised that the University Senate and Council were kept appraised of the views and recommendations of the Student Senate, and previous debates had informed many important University decisions, including determination of tuition fee levels.

All present introduced themselves, with students indicating which Departments or constituencies that they were representing, and staff the posts they held at the University.

**RSS07.2 Composition and membership of Student Senate, 2012-13
[Paper 1, *updated version tabled at the meeting*] (Chair; Secretary)**

The contents of Paper 1, which listed the Terms of Reference, composition and current membership of the Student Senate, were confirmed.

It was noted that all posts on the Student Senate were already filled for this first meeting.

RSS07.3 Report from the last meeting (previously circulated) [Paper 2] (Chair; Secretary)

The contents of the Report from the previous meeting of Student Senate, held on 9 May 2012, were confirmed.

RSS07.4 Matters arising from last meeting (including report on use of student-led element of the University Budget) (Chair; Director of Finance; Members)

The Pro Vice-Chancellor & Director of Finance, Reggie Blennerhassett, told the meeting that the popular 24-hour opening of the University Library at key times of the academic year has been extended from 4 weeks to 12 weeks altogether in this academic year, 2012-13.

RSS07.5 Student Self-Assessment Document for the coming Quality Assurance Agency Review [Paper 3] (RSU)

The Roehampton Students' Union President, Wade Tomlinson, introduced the student-led submission for the coming review of the University by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The submission was partly in the form of a Report, provided as Paper 3, but also in a video comprising nineteen student interviews (accessible via a web link).

The QAA Team would visit Roehampton twice. A preliminary visit in December, which would involve some student input as well as that of senior staff, would be followed by a longer visit in January to interview specific individuals in relation to the University's and Students' submissions.

The Students' submission highlighted students' views and indicated general levels of satisfaction via a traffic-light method. A number of the 'amber' aspects were explored at the meeting. These included, in the order raised:

- Lecturers' teaching styles, including levels of engagement with students, and the use of PowerPoint presentation
- Teaching beyond how to pass assessments
- Timing of provision of feedback may still be staff-centred, rather than timely for students
- Maintaining extracurricular activities throughout the year
- Communication with students: which are the best methods?
- Work Placements: managing the process speedily and effectively

- Inviting Roehampton Alumni as speakers and mentors
- Module choice: expectations and reality

RSS07.6 What do students want in, and from, a University Library? [Paper 4] (University Librarian)

The Vice-Chancellor advised the meeting that the University was hoping to build a new Library in the next few years, and senior staff were interested to know now about students' priorities regarding Library services.

The University Librarian, Susan Scorey, initiated a discussion at the meeting, both about how library services might be improved now and building a sound basis for the Library of the future. Views that emerged include the following:

- Provide online guidance, and a virtual tour of the Library and library services; perhaps also a guide leaflet?
- Improve signage
- Increase the e-book resource, and online video provision to maximise loans and minimise storage space
- Endeavour to increase numbers of books available if financially viable
- Loan Netbooks and laptops
- Reconsider the online booking process for study spaces, including allowing longer lead-in times, and possible departmental allocation
- Consider changes to Computer Suite dedication and allocation
- Encourage students to book teaching rooms, outside the Library, for group study sessions (via current Occasional Booking System); viewing equipment can also be hired via Library Services
- Increase the numbers of desks available to encourage students to use books at the Library, rather than taking off-campus
- Try to increase the numbers of quiet spaces in the Library, and elsewhere (e.g. newly-opened Manresa Hall space in Whitelands)
- Determine optimum size for 'Wired', for those who like to work in a noisier environment
- Gather students' views on their favourite libraries, and favourite aspects of them
- Ensure the Library is fit for future technology and also flexible
- Clarify access rights to other libraries for Roehampton students

Students were also encouraged to join in when focus-groups to discuss the future of library facilities were convened.

RSS07.7 RSU Drinks Limitation Campaign (RSU)

Steve Molyneux, RSU Vice-President, told the meeting about a RSU drinks-limitation campaign, instigated following concerns about student's drink consumption and related health and behaviour issues.

The campaign, advertised via flat reps, a video, Fresh magazine, T-shirts etc., appears to have been successful so far, and continues to make an impact.

Staff present at the meeting supported the Campaign wholeheartedly, considering it to be a very positive approach to a difficult and important issue among the student population.

RSS07.8 Update on 'You said, we did' Initiative (RSU)

The RSU Students' Union President, Wade Tomlinson, advised the meeting of points that had been raised with RSU under this initiative seeking student's concerns and requests.

There had been some 200 responses during the current term, many of which had been answered immediately, and many addressed over a longer term. Examples of matters raised were as follows:

- Reduction of Gym membership fees
- Language classes on campus ('Languages for All' courses are available)
- Student Ambassador Training
- Establishment of a University shop, especially for basic daily needs
- Provision of microwave ovens and kettles in common rooms
- Provision of lockers in Colleges for student use
- Car-parking on campus (available for those with special needs)
- Improving evening facilities on-site at the University
- Improving toilet facilities across the University

Staff and RSU officers and interns were working together to address the issues raised most often by students.

RSS07.9 'Top of your agenda' (Student members of Student Senate)

The Vice-Chancellor invited student members to let the meeting know matters of most importance to them just now, whether positive or negative in nature.

Many students took the opportunity to advertise projects, campaigns or work they were currently involved in and wanted other students to be aware of and support. Although there were some specific concerns expressed, noted by staff for further action, many students present were enjoying their courses and finding student life rewarding at Roehampton.

Four of the Interns working with RSU also spoke under this item, encouraging students to support and join societies and campaigns, provide input into 'Fresh' TV and Radio and to maintain Roehampton's sporting standards.

RSS07.10 Dates of future meetings: Wednesdays 20 February 2013, 8 May 2013

*Andrew Skinner
Deputy University Secretary
Secretary to Student Senate
November 2012*