

# UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON

## STUDENT SENATE

### Summary Report on business considered at the ninth Meeting of the University Student Senate held on Wednesday 8 May 2013

#### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that formal apologies had been received from Prof. Michael Day, Michael James, Anna Kumang Krettmann, Steve Molyneaux, Nurani Nathoo and Prof. Claire Ozanne.

#### **2. Report from the last meeting (Paper RSS09/1)**

The meeting received and confirmed the Report from the last meeting, held on 20 February 2013, and it was agreed that Student Senate remained a useful forum for student feedback.

#### **3. Growhampton (Paper RSS09/4)**

- 3.1 The General Manager of RSU, Chris O'Boyle, explained that the Union had completed an expression of interest form to apply for funding from the £5m NUS Student Green Fund. RSU's application is in connection "Growhampton", a project designed to embed sustainability in everyday life of students, staff and the community.
- 3.2 The initial application of £220k funding over a two-year period incorporates a Food Café/Co-op to be run by a paid member of staff and student volunteers. It is designed to create an outward-facing hub for staff and students: to provide an opportunity to buy fresh produce; develop new social spaces; create volunteering opportunities for students and young unemployed people (through the local charity Regenerate); to develop skills and confidence; to embed sustainability into the curriculum; and for Business School and other students to be involved in entrepreneurial projects.
- 3.3 RSU would need to develop its own green fund by investing profits from the Co-op but also needs to demonstrate self-sustainability after the initial two-year NUS funding. P&FM will do everything it can within the Campus Masterplan to support the initiative but RSU needs to develop its own sustainability plan. It was suggested that the Union could apply for lottery and other charitable grants.
- 3.4 The initial expression of interest received support from the NUS and the Environmental Team but further University commitment is required to develop and run the Food Café/Co-op, including allocation of appropriate space, before the full expression of interest is submitted to the NUS by 26 June.
- 3.5 Growhampton is viewed as a unique opportunity to highlight the University's "Make a Difference" platform based on its extensive grounds, an "edible" campus and student and community engagement towards healthy living.
- 3.6 Interested parties such as Wandsworth health professionals, Roehampton academics and the Kew Gardens project team have all expressed support.

- 3.7 Consideration needs to be given to developing space that is accessible to the local community. Bringing the community onto campus would also give them access to University drama and dance productions.
- 3.8 The Director of P&FM would liaise with catering and grounds contractors to collaborate with Growhampton, and she also agreed to provide the sales figures from campus outlets to RSU to give a realistic view of sales expectations. It was hoped that the Food Café would provide evening and weekend sales opportunities which may not be available generally now.
- 3.9 Consideration will also need to be given to management of the University allotments: how to engage with staff, students and the local community, especially involvement over the summer periods
- 3.10 The project will be discussed at the Environmental Forum in May before the full expression of interest is finalised: it was considered important to accentuate the involvement of (and include letters of support where possible) Kew Gardens, Wandsworth Borough Council, the London Wetlands Centre and Regenerate.

**ACTION:** Chris O'Boyle and RSU to liaise with the PVC & Director of Finance and the Director, P&FM to agree the University's commitment, which must be sustainable and reasonable.

#### **4. Big Amnesty Feedback**

- 4.1 RSU ran this feedback campaign to gather student opinion on five key areas of University experience:
  - Their academic experience
  - What they would change if they were in charge
  - The physical campus
  - The people that have helped them most
  - Why they love Roehampton
- 4.2 Feedback was collected from a focus group of 212 students and the most important issues are highlighted below.
- 4.3 Computers for printing only was the top priority – it is important to highlight the flexibility of printing from Uniflow printers and printing direct from mobile devices will be possible in the future

**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor & Director of Finance will check if all departments have their own Uniflow printer.

- 4.4 More performance spaces for rehearsing and showcases
- 4.5 Removal of 9-hour restriction on online submissions via Turnitin
- 4.6 Reciprocal arrangements with overseas universities to give library support to Masters students when researching overseas

**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor & Director of Finance to investigate the possibility of reciprocal arrangements

- 4.7 Consider timetabling policy to avoid single lecture attendance in a day, thus making travelling costs more reasonable.
- 4.8 Access to the Trados translation software is very restricted so consider widening access, perhaps via cloud computing.

**ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor & Director of Finance and Director, P&FM**, to liaise with Director, ITMS, to check licensing restrictions and possibility of access via cloud computing.

4.9 The Vice-Chancellor found the feedback helpful and thanked RSU Campaigns Intern, Jonathan Carter, for orchestrating the survey.

## **5. Student-led Budget (Paper RSS09/2)**

5.1 The RSU President outlined the RSU wishlist, the most pressing item being a Student Life internship at a cost of £15k-20k per year. Other items are highlighted below.

5.2 Development of outdoor space and more seating on campus.

5.3 More availability of laundry facilities, especially in Digby Stuart where there is a particular shortage.

5.4 Increased availability of shuttle buses from Barnes to the University although this was not well used during a trial last year. It was suggested that the University could sponsor a public bus route, similar to the Kingston University service, from Barnes to the Roehampton estate via the University.

**ACTION: Director, P&FM**, to investigate the possibility of running a University-sponsored bus route and report the results to FSG.

5.5 All University software to be available on all computers.

5.6 More video or plasma screens to be available to show rolling RSU information and news, eg varsity sports games. More content would be needed, eg academic, student life, sport, society events, national student survey issues and this could be developed by the student life team.

5.7 Redevelop the RU app to be linked to student records to give student information and to the news feed/screens.

5.8 More e-learning workshops for new students, particularly in Humanities, perhaps to include aptitude test, and to link in with the employability agenda.

5.9 Welfare package to be available

5.10 Extended hours of opening of the undergraduate offices for submission of work

5.11 Kettles and microwaves to be available in kitchenettes in Whitelands and in the bar area in the common room.

5.12 A poll of attending students revealed the top four issues, after the student life internship, were: enhanced society funding; development of outdoor spaces; increased laundry facilities; and increase in plasma information screens.

**ACTION: RSU and Pro Vice-Chancellor & Director of Finance**, to develop costings related to the top four items to assess viability.

5.13 The Vice-Chancellor found the list a very useful indicator of what really matters to students.

## **6. Campus Developments (Paper RSS09/5)**

- 6.1 A number of issues were identified in relation to campus developments.
- 6.2 The need to increase footfall in the gym, bar and sports areas, including the development of Monte Hall, and to improve a lot of the current student accommodation.
- 6.3 The iGrad survey had good results for Roehampton, but there needs to be a substantial increase in facilities; Nottingham and Hertfordshire Universities were good examples to follow
- 6.4 It was suggested that it would be useful to have a social subgroup comprising the Director, P&FM, student representatives, representatives from Sport Roehampton, student welfare and architects in order to discuss the creation of an ideal student hub including spaces for sports activities, social areas and performances.
- 6.5 Currently the capital development plans focus on developing a new library and new halls of residence at Downshire House and Digby Stuart College.
- 6.6 The Students' Union is not large enough and will not cope with an estimated further 600 students wanting to access it.
- 6.7 If Froebel is seen as the social hub and Digby Stuart the academic and employability hub, there is a need to develop Southlands and Whitelands as specific destinations in the same way.

## **7. National Student Survey**

- 7.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor stated that she was keen to get students' views about their programmes, perhaps with incentives to complete the NSS. Current incentives include the possibility to win an iPad, to gain printing credits and, very popular, the department with the highest response wins tickets to the Summer Ball.
- 7.2 Other options include free printing and/or binding for dissertations; departments with 80% participation to choose an event of their choice.

## **8. Student-led Teaching Awards (Paper RSS09/6)**

This year's teaching awards received over 430 responses, much higher than last year, with a special mention going to programme reps Anne Krettman and Nancy Usher.

## **9. RSU Annual Awards**

The RSU President advised that the awards in eight different categories would be made at a ceremony at 4pm on Wednesday 22 May.

## **10. "Top of your agenda"**

Students present were invited to raise matters of current importance to them, which represented a wide range of issues, both general in nature and specific to departments and/or individuals, including the following:

- Ramp access in Grove House
- The use of iPads
- Seating on the lawns
- More performance spaces
- Support for societies from the departments
- Support for dissertations in the How to Study Guide, particularly relating to Social Anthropology
- More variety of food, especially in Wired café
- Access to Learning Fund and additional support for postgraduates
- Lack of support and understaffing on courses – no consistency among Media, Culture & Language programmes
- International mentorship for overseas PG students and library support for undergraduates
- An appreciation to the Humanities Department regarding Philosophy as a compulsory subject
- Additional opportunities for volunteering and alumni connections, ie volunteering for the Citizens' Advice Bureau can help with reducing qualifications required for additional education, eg law training.

#### **11. Thanks to Student Senators**

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the student representatives on Student Senate for their useful and stimulating input to this important forum and advised that all points raised would be considered for further action.

#### **12. Date of meetings in 2013/14**

All at 2pm in the Convent Parlour:

Wednesday 6 November 2013

Wednesday 26 February 2014

Wednesday 7 May 2014

*Fiona Downes  
Secretariat Officer (Council)  
June 2013*