

Actions

Action	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
Agenda item: The Environmental sustainability strategy to be an agenda item for the June Strategy session.	22/05	DA	June 2022
Present the People Strategy implementation plan and targets to Council.	22/30	TB/HE-J	July 2022
Receive the revised student Marketing plan at the June Strategy session.	22/53	DA	June 2022
International student recruitment especially with regard to China to be addressed at the June Strategy day.	22/53	DA/KB	June 2022
Council to consider and agree a shared understanding of the risk appetite at a future meeting.	21/292	MW	July 2022

Action from current meeting

~~Action completed since last meeting~~

Council

17 February 2022

17:00-19:15

The Moore Auditorium



M22/01-M22/67

Minutes

Present:	Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair)	Ms Sarah King
	Dr Donna Brown (<i>until 19.05</i>)	Professor Paul Layzell
	Mr Simon Davis	Mr Gerry O'Hagan
	Ms Ann Ewing (Vice Chair)	Mrs Chris Shoukry (<i>arrived 17:10</i>)
	Professor Michael Farthing	Ms Henriette Warwick
	Mrs Christine Goodyear	Mr David Williams
	Mr John Gregory	Mr Ian Wilson
	Ms Maia Jarvis	
Present via MS Teams	Mr Nick Perryman (Vice Chair)	Mr David Walker (<i>until 18.18</i>)
	Mr Balram Veliath	Mr Ian Wilson
Apologies	Mr Peter Saraga (Co-opted)	Professor Bob Fitzgerald
Secretary:	Dr David Ashton (MS Teams)	Deputy Principal (Operations) and Secretary to Council
In attendance:	Professor Ken Badcock	Deputy Principal (Academic) and Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy & Research)
	Professor Tracy Bhamra	Senior Vice Principal (Student and Staff Experience)
	Mrs Helen Ellis-Jones	Director of Human Resources
	Professor James Knowles	Senior Vice Principal (Education)
	Mrs Mary White	Chief Financial Officer
Clerk:	Mrs Hazel Jessop	Deputy Secretary to Council (Secondary minutes)
	Mrs Pauline Martin	Executive Officer for Council, Minutes

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

RECEIVED apologies from Mr Peter Saraga and Professor Bob Fitzgerald. 22/01

NOTED Mr Nick Perryman, Mr Balram Veliath, Mr Ian Wilson and Mr David Walker joined the meeting via MS Teams along with Dr David Ashton. 22/02

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest for agenda items. 22/03

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

APPROVED and signed minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 (M21/257 – 21/320) 22/04

NOTED with regard to actions from the November meeting: 22/05

- SU update on Digital learning; this action was no longer required as in a College Student Experience Survey 94% of respondents said they had adequate digital access to learning and no negative feedback was received about online provision.
- Racism and harassment – a paper/presentation on process and policy and safety on campus required at the next Council meeting (supersedes action 21/85).
- Environmental sustainability – the capital expenditure framework was being reviewed by Finance committee, and a report is to be presented at the next Council meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were none. 22/06

5. UN-STARRING OF ITEMS

There were no items unstarred. 22/07

Mrs Chris Shoukry arrived 17:10

MAJOR BUSINESS

6. PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

RECEIVED a report from the Principal NOTING the key items: 22/08

- OfS consultation on quality and standards
- Academic staff realignment
- USS pension valuation
- Opening of new space on our London campus
- Slough
- £1m+ European Research Grant award
- New Economic Impact Report
- Student recruitment for 2022-2023

DISCUSSED the possible implications of one of the proposals in the consultation "that each registered provider holds responsibility for the quality and standards of all of its higher education courses, irrespective of the organisation that delivers them." This has particular consequences for the College's federal arrangements with the University of London as the implication is that the University of London will have a direct interest and accountability for all the undergraduate students to whom we award a University of London degree. Whilst the College awards degrees of the University of London, RHUL has also had its own degree awarding powers since 2008. 22/09

AGREED that Council will be updated on any developments with this OfS proposal following consultation with schools, student recruitment and Academic Board and consideration of the options. 22/10

NOTED progress with the work alongside Slough Borough Council, in particular with a plan to establish a University Teaching Centre at Langley College, backed by Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and supported by the LEP. 22/11

	NOTED growth in the London Graduate School with new teaching space in the University of London's Stewart House which is additional to our original London home at 11 Bedford Square and the teaching space in Senate House.	22/12
	NOTED a £1m+ grant awarded for a five year research project to investigate why communities tolerate organised crime, also NOTED an allocation of College capital funding to support challenge-led research in the digital technologies catalyst for a project called "Omnidrone". The project meets an identified business need and will involve 27 staff developing a new centre for drones.	22/13
	NOTED findings of the 2021 report commissioned by the College from Biggar Economics. The report investigated the economic impact of the College on the region in the academic year 2019/20, a year significantly affected by the global pandemic.	22/14
	NOTED the key findings of the Biggar report were that Royal Holloway generated a significant contribution to the economy in each of the three regions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £190.8 million Gross Value Added (GVA) and 2,760 jobs in Runnymede • £221.3 million GVA and 3,030 jobs in Surrey and • £657.1 million GVA and 7,150 jobs across the UK 	22/15
	NOTED the report of UCAS applications for UG programmes, of application processing and staffing and of PGT student recruitment for summer 2022. This was discussed under item 10 College Strategy Reporting for Pillar 1. (<i>Minute ref 22/39 – 22/53</i>)	22/16
	NOTED that a briefing about any items that had been reported in the press would be helpful, with reference to the press reporting of a "content note" being issued by the College for the Dickens' novel Oliver Twist. The news report was the result of an FOI circulated to all UK institutions.	22/17
	NOTED the steps being taken to address the underlying issues of content/trigger warnings, including the development of a short and clear policy that would facilitate debate and also address the duty of care and provision of support for students with particular experiences.	22/18
7.	ST GEORGE'S	
7.1	NOTED that merger discussions with St George's had come to an end.	22/19
	NOTED that the discussions had identified new opportunities for mutually beneficial ways of working together; identifying opportunities in research and for teaching and these would be encouraged to continue. The Chair of Council asked that Council receive regular updates on any joint working developments with St George's. <i>Ms Maia Jarvis left the meeting 17:40</i>	22/20
7.2	NOTED that Finance Committee will review the financial due diligence conducted by St George's for any lessons learned. <i>Ms Maia Jarvis returned to the meeting 17:45</i>	22/21
8.	SCHEME AND UNIVERSITY TITLE APPLICATIONS	
	RECEIVED an update on progress with the Scheme and the university title application, a process that had been underway for over five years.	22/22

	NOTED that following advice by the Charity Commission and approval by Executive Board, internal consultation had been conducted by the College. Two responses to the consultation were received and it was confirmed to Council that they had been addressed.	22/23
	NOTED Council was now asked to NOTE that internal consultation had been completed and to approve the Scheme. If approved the process would revert back to the Charity Commission and DCMS who would determine if external consultation was required. If external consultation was required the anticipated completion of the process was June 2022.	22/24
	APPROVED the Scheme to go forward to the Charity Commission and DCMS.	22/25
9.	COLLEGE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT	
	RECEIVED the People Strategy which was aligned to and supported the delivery of the 3 Year Strategic Plan. The overarching aim of the strategy is "creating value through and for our people". The strategy recognises that people are the College's key asset as well as a key expenditure and the College reputation rests on the efforts and endeavours of our staff.	22/26
	NOTED the People Committee's role in reviewing and contributing to the development of the strategy since its inception in March 2021. The committee was very aware of the dual need of the organisation and of what staff, and potential staff, are looking for in an employer in terms of career development, being valued and supported. Development work included an all staff survey to understand, from the staff perspective, what makes for a rewarding and fulfilling workplace.	22/27
	NOTED the three main influences identified from the external environment and 3 Year Strategic Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to changing expectations • Achieving financial sustainability • Creating capacity to deliver excellence 	22/28
	NOTED the five strategic goals of the strategy and the projects that underpin the implementation of the strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared purpose and engagement • A place for potential to thrive • Achievement through diversity and diverse perspectives • Confident and inspiring leadership and management • Aligned and enabling organisational structures and capability 	22/29
	APPROVED the People Strategy and to progress to the presentation of an implementation plan and targets to the July 2022 meeting.	22/30
10.	COLLEGE STRATEGY REPORTING	
10.1	RECEIVED the annual report on implementation of Pillar 1 of the three year strategic plan noting the goals of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving graduate outcomes. • Meeting access and participation plan targets. • Increasing home undergraduate student numbers. • Decreasing dependency on clearing. 	22/31

NOTED the key purpose of these goals being to increase student numbers and respond to the London demographic where, by 2030, the number of 18 year olds was forecast to increase by 30%.	22/32
NOTED the challenges of the current positioning of the College and the external environment with numerous changes being driven through the sector and NOTED three key areas of work were underway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernising the portfolio of course offering at both UG and PGT level to align with career and life aspirations of the emerging London and international demographic. • Creation of a teaching and learning approach, supported by student experience, that is more aligned with sector best practice and aligned with the target UG and PGT student demographic. • Update of the marketing plan to present the new portfolio and teaching and learning offer to achieve the student number targets and financial viability of the resource plan. 	22/33
NOTED the eight programmes of actions to deliver the pillar objectives and current major projects were aimed at implementing change and focussed on creating enabling structures for future developments.	22/34
NOTED the setting up of the Inclusive Education Committee supporting Accelerating Progress on Awarding Gaps (L4). The committee objectives are to assure our education supports the success of all students, including the more diverse intake from London, and that Access and Participation Plan targets are met.	22/35
NOTED that our student population is growing in Black, Asian and Minority ethnic students and this growth will continue with the orientation to London. Our offering will be positioned to address their needs and aspirations.	22/36
DISCUSSED the Black/white awarding gap in particular continues to be a complex challenge. Inequalities of outcome and grade inflation were pulling in opposite directions and required a dual focussed approach of recalibrating assessment whilst ensuring quality standards continued to be met. Some kinds of assessment worked better or worse for some students, for example a Black/White feedback gap had been identified.	22/37
DISCUSSED The Sutton Trust report on Learning for Life and data from UCL, identified a difference in award levels and progression into graduate employment between students living on Campus compared to those living at home. Acquiring and analysing the data for our students was a priority project. Until our own data becomes available we would be learning from the responses of other institutions and implementing trials to research what would work for our students.	22/38
NOTED the year 1 development projects in Pillar 1 focussed on increasing student recruitment, (L2, 3, 6, 7 and 8) and the December count figures where, despite higher application numbers compared to the previous year, and a 14.5% increase in Firm and Insurance responses, UG home student intake was 332FTE short of target.	22/39
NOTED the pillar 1 objectives and actions to deliver the strategic objectives were aimed at addressing these issues in UG recruitment and development work was underway to get changes into the market for September 2023 start, following one year of development and one year of recruitment.	22/40
NOTED that PGT external student recruitment remained challenging and the development of the PGT portfolio was moving to the next phase, with programme concepts developed now being put into validation for a September 2022 launch to market.	22/41

NOTED the challenges of overseas UG recruitment from China. Recruitment and marketing practices in China were under review although strong improvement in undergraduate admissions was now being seen from the results of the strategic development of the Pathways Programmes with Study Group's new programmes (Pillar 2 of the Strategy). The strategic relationship with Study Group was supporting the diagnosis and action on the very significant reductions in PGT and open market UG applications from China.	22/42
NOTED the financial implications of the Home/Overseas mix of students was a one year impact of £8-10m fee income. Steps were already being taken to manage expenditure and developments were being put in place to ensure that popular subjects would not be constrained in their recruitment for 2022/23 by insufficient resources.	22/43
NOTED frustration that in year two of the three year strategy that College was not making the progress required to meet strategic targets in student recruitment and marketing or in reducing dependency on clearing. Council challenged whether there was enough focus on development of the London boroughs and schools for Home UG recruitment in order to take advantage of the 30% increase in 18 year olds to 2030 as identified in the strategy.	22/44
DISCUSSED that in one paper it was reported that the College had established links with only one London secondary school. <i>(after note: This refers to a special developmental project with Feltham, where we are working closely with Reach Academy on a deep relationship, including supporting the development of a creative arts focussed sixth form)</i> . NOTED that the College had built relations with 397 schools in London many with strong, ongoing links, and this included 139 schools in the three target western London boroughs. Also with 215 schools in the south east, 83 in east England and 68 in the south west.	22/45
NOTED data (taken at the point of the UCAS January applications deadline) showed that RHUL applications were above the sector average with UG Home applications showing a 2.6% increase, compared to the sector at 2% above the previous year.	22/46
DISCUSSED the need to refresh the marketing plan to incorporate the actions from the BCG work. Council expressed concern that the issues would take time to address and that it was imperative the 2023 student recruitment round benefitted from the BCG work.	22/47
DISCUSSED the increase in the target demographic would not continue indefinitely and that the work to refresh the marketing proposition should be moved forward rapidly.	22/48
AGREED the marketing plan would be discussed at the June Strategy day and it was expected that the updated plan will influence the recruitment cycle from 2023.	22/49
DISCUSSED that issues with the mechanics of processing student applications had been identified some time ago and were a long time to resolve. NOTED that the plan had been to have a larger admissions team in place by mid-February, but this was about four weeks behind the target due to the challenge of staff. PGT applications processing time was still nine days above the target. It was suggested by the executive that the target of twenty days should be achievable within weeks. Some of the challenges with fast turnaround were to do with complicated and old IT systems and processes. A tender exercise for a new application system would commence at Easter. The aim was for the new system to be live for the start of the applicant processing cycle in January 2023.	22/50

	NOTED that overseas student recruitment was particularly challenging in China. Other institutions, the Russell Group in particular, had put a great deal of resource and effort into marketing in China in response to anticipated loss of income from the 'Covid effect' in China and the College was being out-powered. It was questioned whether we were right to continue to focus on China. The large markets were China, India and USA. It was felt that there was still opportunity in China and the marketing effort and organisation was under urgent review to address it.	22/51
	DISCUSSED that PGT student recruitment was also a major concern, noting that the median processing time was still nine days above the target. It was considered that the target of twenty days was achievable and a tender exercise for a new application system would commence at Easter. The aim was for the new system to be live for the start of the applicant processing cycle in January 2023.	22/52
	NOTED the annual report on implementation of Pillar 1 and REQUIRED to address at the June Strategy day the student marketing plan and international student recruitment, especially with regard to China.	22/53
10.2	RECEIVED the KPI monitoring report, which noted the progress with milestones and progress against 2021/22 targets.	22/54
	NOTED that the People related topics would be updated for the next review with completion of the pulse survey	22/55
	<i>Dr Donna Brown left the meeting 19:05</i>	
	DISCUSSED the strategic objective in relation to reducing the proportion of spend on professional services with pilot projects in PGT admissions processing and enquiry management alongside a project with external support to define the route to 30%. The operating model would address the issue of centralisation and devolved working, better use of IT to drive decision making and use wider sector knowledge, with a focus on process improvement before IT development.	22/56
	AGREED:	22/57
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to add a statement of risk to the KPI updates • to present a full picture of the risks and mitigations to the June Strategy day • to share the front page of the risk report at each Council meeting which would include the risks outside tolerance and those moving in an adverse direction. 	
11.	IT RISK	
	The high level report on IT risks and forward actions following the IT Disaster Recovery audit was deferred to the May Council meeting.	22/58
12.	FINANCE	
	RECEIVED the current year financial report and NOTED that income continued to increase and costs savings were still being made as College was not yet operating in a normal environment.	22/59

STARRED ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL

13.* REPORTABLE EVENTS

NOTED the merger discussions with St George's were reported to the OfS as a reportable event under OfS condition 3(i). The termination of merger discussions have also been reported to the OfS under the same condition. 22/60

NOTED that a report was submitted to the OfS, as a reportable event, regarding the new teaching locations in central London at Stewart House and Birkbeck. UKVI require us to inform our "educational statutory body" about teaching in new locations in order for UKVI to approve sponsorship status to include these new locations. This is not a significant reportable event and to date there has been no response from the OfS. 22/61

14.* REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY

There were none. 22/62

15.* REGISTER OF INTERESTS

NOTED the Register of Council members' Interests for 2021/2022 with one correction to the declaration of Miss Maia Jarvis amending the Royal Holloway Students Union trusteeship of Miss Maia Jarvis to an unpaid role and the VP Education role as paid employment. 22/63

16.* SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

10 January 2022: Lease of business premises at the Orchard Cottage, RHBNC, South Road, Egham, Surrey between RHBNC and Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd 22/64

31 January 2022: Agreement under section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act restricting development on land at Rusham Park, between Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey County Council and RHBNC. 22/65

OTHER MATTERS

17. Other Business


None

18. Dates of next Council meetings

Council meetings for the remainder of the academic year are being planned to be held on Campus, 22/66

- 5 May 2022, 17:00
- Strategy Session (*full day 23 June 2022 at Senate House, London tbc*)
- 7 July 2022, 17:00

THE EXHIBITION BOOK		22/67
NOTED the following minutes provided in the Exhibition Book as a separate document:		
EB1	ACADEMIC BOARD	
	Final minutes of the meeting 20 October 2021	
EB2	MINUTES OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS	
	Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee 6 September 2021	
	Finance Committee 14 September 2021	
	Students, Education and Research Committee 5 October 2021	
	Strategy & Governance Committee 21 October 2021	
	People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 28 October 2021	
	Finance Committee 28 October 2021 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee 8 November 2021 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	Students, Education and Research Committee 2 December 2021 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 12 January 2022 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	Strategy & Governance Committee 20 January 2022 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee 7 February 2022 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	Finance Committee 17 February 2022 (<i>not yet available</i>)	
	The following Committees have not met since the last meeting of Council	
	Remuneration Committee and Principal's Pay Committee (next meeting May 2022 date tbc)	



Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP
Chair of Council

Date 5 May 2022