

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the unreserved meeting of the Board of Governors on Wednesday 25th March from 4.30 - 7.30pm via remote video conference

Present	In attendance	Apologies
Andrew Summers (Chair) Andy Cook Nathan Donaldson Helen Higson Tamara Howe Guy Hurd Jon Kingsbury Katharina Koall Lisa Mooney Alex Phillips Marta Phillips Samantha Silver Jo Stimpson Jon Walmsley David Worthington	Margaret Bird- Director of HR & OD Brian Duncan- Director of Finance John O'Boyle- Director of Compliance Gary Pritchard- Pro Vice Chancellor Drew Robinson - Director Projects & Operations Emma Shailer- Director of Student Recruitment & Success Lawrence Zeegen- Pro Vice Chancellor Deborah Iles – EA to the VC (minutes) Dawn Turpin – AUA Consulting Nick Rodriguez - Course Leader Games Design	Katie Germer

	APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS
20/1157	Following the results of the election, Katharine Koall was approved and appointed as academic staff governor and Marta Phillips was approved for a third term of one year.
	WELCOME & APOLOGIES
20/1158	Nick Rodriguez was thanked for an informative presentation of the work of the Games Design courses before the start of the formal board meeting.
20/1159	It was pointed out that this will be David Worthington's last meeting. Dawn Turpin from AUA Consulting was welcomed to the meeting as an observer. AUA Consulting are undertaking a review of governance effectiveness at Ravensbourne University London.
20/1160	Apologies were noted from Katie Germer with Deborah Iles in attendance taking minutes.
	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
20/1161	Members were reminded to declare any interests, personal or financial, that might relate to the business shown on the agenda for the meeting. No such declarations were made.
	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
20/1162	In the absence of minutes being included in the distributed paper pack, the Chair reviewed the summary action list that had been circulated directly after the last meeting and concluded that appropriate actions were being taken to address all of the points. ACTION: The minutes from the 29 th January 2020 to be approved at the next meeting.
	CHAIR'S UPDATE
20/1163	The Chair outlined the extraordinary circumstances that were taking place, and that the Acting Vice Chancellor and executive team have been in crisis mode, keeping the institution running and moving to an eLearning mode. Thanks were given to the whole team for their continued work in these difficult times. It was highlighted that the board's involvement around governance was a balance between supporting the Acting Vice Chancellor and the executive team, allowing them space to get on with their necessary jobs, and discharging its responsibilities as the governing body of the institution.
20/1164	It was stated that the Emergency Committee, as a sub-group of the board, would meet on 7 th April in order to keep up to date with the situation.
20/1165	It was reported that the VC recruitment will be put on hold for the time being and will be reviewed in three months' time. It is currently planned that the university will start to interview in July/August and may not appoint before September.
	COVID-19 UPDATE
20/1166	The Acting Vice Chancellor informed the board that the institution is in a secure place and that we managed to test the eLearning system prior to the switch over to remote working entirely.

20/1167	Staff and student welfare was a concern as some individuals are completely isolated and may struggle. In the first instance we are following the government advice and will also stay in regular contact by communicating any updates.
20/1168	The finances are constantly being reviewed and we are confident that we will be able to reach breakeven at the end of the financial year but have been focused on where mitigations can be made and how this may be impacted by our recruitment numbers.
20/1169	It was reported that while our marketing and recruitment efforts were looking very favourable with our applications up by 9%, we now need to convert these applications into students. We are looking at how we can adapt conversion into a remote process. It was noted that there will be fewer international students so there will be more competition amongst other universities so we are compiling a threat analysis on this.
20/1170	Regarding the running of the business, we have spoken to all the course leaders about delivering the eLearning package and those who have identified difficulties will work closely with the teams in order to review the briefs to adapt, in readiness for the next term.
20/1171	There is some concern amongst students regarding assessment dates but the executive team has agreed measures and an approach and has worked out achievable progression routes for Year 1 and 2 and arrangements are all in hand.
20/1172	Whilst we are working hard to adapt our model we are also reviewing the best parts of the new delivery techniques with a view to introducing some of them into a new model of working in the future.
20/1173	It was suggested that the institution should plan for the building to be closed for the long term. In response to this it was outlined that conversations are taking place with course leaders to look at how we might run a recruitment model in a remote way, and also starting to think about the next academic year.
20/1174	From a business continuity point of view, the institution is documenting on a course by course, module by module basis any changes that are taking place to assessment dates and any extensions given, in order to record the audit trail of decisions made, with any adjustments agreed at the academic board. It was reported that the Architects Registration Board is showing some flexibility with their regulations. A letter has been drafted to the external examiners and we are awaiting confirmation on a couple of items before sending.
20/1175	In terms of wellbeing, student services are working well remotely and all counselling sessions have moved to an online service, with 100% attendance, which is not the usual attendance rate for face to face sessions. Going forward, these sessions may all move to online due to the high attendance rate that is being witnessed. A communication to staff will be distributed shortly to emphasize the range of wellbeing services we offer. Assurance has been sought with the building contractors regarding keeping on paid staff, and will continue to provide assurance to staff to confirm that jobs are secure. It was also confirmed that the term end date will stay the same.
20/1176	If the building for the Institution for Creativity and Technology is delayed, a start date of January would be appropriate, but consideration needs to be given to students who may have visa restrictions if we do move the start date. The reason for the delay in signing the design district building lease was outlined, and it was confirmed that Eversheds will take over with the transaction from here on in, and although timescales were not established, no further issues were anticipated. Knight Dragon confirmed that building work had stopped in

20/1177	<p>the design district with no timescales for when this might commence again so a January launch would be more favourable for us</p> <p>The Students Union is actively engaging with the student population ensuring that they feel part of the community, offering many opportunities to communicate with students online and giving them support from home.</p>
	ACTING VC REPORT
20/1178	Discussions took place regarding the proposed Ravensbourne Digital Academy and approval was sought from the board to draft a proposal. It was suggested that a feasibility study could be a good way to research this proposal further.
20/1179	Issues were raised regarding whether we do need to take on new buildings in light of the new way of delivering our courses via eLearning and how this might affect the plans. In response to this it was outlined that we would look to create courses that are more blended as opposed to completely online.
20/1180	<p>Other comments from the board outlined that this was a perfect opportunity to grab all the options available, and agreed to go ahead with developing the Digital Academy proposal.</p> <p>ACTION: The board agreed in principle the development of the Digital Academy without necessarily requiring a new building and further proposals would be presented to the next meeting.</p>
	RSU REPORT
20/1181	<p>The Students Union President summarised his report, and outlined that the Students Union's main aim was to build a supportive online community.</p> <p>Recent turnout for the elections had been very positive and the newly appointed members will shadow the current members in order to provide a seamless handover in July and to keep momentum going through the transition.</p> <p>Drop in sessions started initially due to the NSS but as they were being attended by a lot of first and second year students who wanted to get involved, and have been receiving encouraging feedback, it was decided to continue these sessions.</p> <p>Events that have taken place in order to build the online community have included a movie night, games sessions and counselling. Mental Health Week will carry on as scheduled next week, and will run workshops with support from a mental health support worker.</p> <p>A YouTube channel will be launched as a hub for students to entertain each other, and they will also be launching a Facebook student social page.</p>
20/1182	The board supported all the initiatives that had been outlined and that work needs to carry on to help support the students during these unprecedented times. The Students Union is working very closely with Student Services to help any disadvantaged students who might need any extra support and are keeping in close communication with them. It was outlined that course leaders are in contact with disadvantaged students and are sending them physical packs of equipment to help support them with their studies.

	DESIGNS FOR THE INSTITUTE FOR CREATIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY - UPDATE
20/1183	The updated designs for the Institute for Creativity and Technology were presented in order to bring the board up to speed on how this phase is going. Work is continuing with Brinkworth who understand our whole concept and the Ravensbourne experience. The designs would create an adaptable space that can be used for a variety of uses. Stipulations of the lease states that we are unable to fix anything to the perimeter of the wall, so the plans are very flexible and open plan.
20/1184	A mezzanine level could be added above the research area, which could add an extra meeting room for up to 20 people and giving an extra 10-15% space to the whole building but it was thought that with the revised budget we would probably not look to proceed with this option.
20/1185	The lease also stipulates that we are not allowed to fix signage to the outside of the building, so Brinkworth have been working with a brand agency to use the large windows for backlit moving signage which will connect us to the main building.
20/1186	<p>The complete design presented comes in at £1.8m and due to feedback at the last Finance Committee, the designs have been stripped back in order to reduce the costs to £1.4m, resulting in key parts of the fit out not being included. The projected numbers for Postgrad were conservative and we have now had more applications than anticipated, so it was recommended that the original business case budget be revised to £1.55m to allow us to bring back some parts of the design, however this still does not include the mezzanine level or the internal cooling system, but does include the perimeter system and the digital signage.</p> <p>(Helen Higson signed out 18.04)</p>
20/1187	Feedback from the board was very positive and the designs were very well received. Queries were raised regarding the signage and how this branding must reflect the branding of the main building and bring them together. The internal cooling system was also discussed and it was strongly recommended that this be included due to the design of the building and also due to storage stipulations regarding the prototype equipment. It was also queried whether the skeleton of the mezzanine level could be constructed with a view to fitting it out at a later date should the space be required.
20/1188	<p>In summary the designs and the budget look good, but the executive team agreed to go away and review the costs, adding in these additional requirements and will bring back the revised budget.</p> <p>ACTION: To review costs and bring back the revised budget in line with feedback, to include structuring the skeleton of mezzanine floor and internal cooling system.</p>
	Marketing recruitment of new courses
20/1189	<p>An outline of the objective was reiterated, to grow our student numbers to 4000 in the next 5 years and in order to do this we need to diversify and develop our current portfolio of courses offered.</p> <p>A presentation was given which gave a brief overview of the HESA data, and our historic JACS codes (Joint Academic Coding of Subjects) at undergraduate level and where we might expand. All of the data lends itself to supporting the digital academy proposal and in</p>

<p>20/1190</p> <p>20/1191</p>	<p>summary looking at marketing and business administration to grow our opportunities.</p> <p>We are now looking at what new courses we can establish with key areas identified for development including cloud computing, AI and Virtual Reality. Also key areas would be management and business within creative industries.</p> <p>(Lisa Mooney left 18.47)</p> <p>Digital and social media marketing was raised as another possible route to explore for new courses, and lots of brands are using branded content to market themselves, so this could be a good fit with Ravensbourne. It was confirmed that the executive team would pursue research into digital courses and will come back with some ideas.</p> <p>ACTION: To bring back to the board ideas on further digital courses that can be included in the offering.</p>
	<p>DIVERSITY</p>
<p>20/1192</p> <p>20/1193</p> <p>20/1194</p>	<p>The annual staff and student diversity reports were reviewed and the main highlights discussed. The report outlined that there are a disproportionate number of female academic staff and also academic BAME staff numbers remain low. It was hoped that the revival of the Diversity Committee would start to address some of these issues.</p> <p>It was outlined that the Ravensbourne student population is quite diverse when compared to other institutions in our subject area. Female students apply to a limited range of courses and then that number is reduced on conversion. The actions around this APP were circulated to the board and submitted to the OfS and there is a commitment to reduce these issues within 5 years, which is also embedded in the learning and teaching plan.</p> <p>The Diversity Committee will aim to focus on creating some institutional objectives which will tackle the areas of concern and moving to an online remote learning approach may provide an opportunity to change things.</p> <p>ACTION: To review and solidify the report and create some institutional objectives with the new Diversity Committee.</p>
	<p>FINANCE UPDATE</p>
<p>20/1195</p> <p>20/1196</p> <p>20/1197</p>	<p>The COVID-19 finance paper contained an update to the main finance paper and outlined that we are in a very dynamic situation and highlighted what the risks are to our original forecast and what we are doing to mitigate these risks. Our current insurance policy does not cover us for this specific virus.</p> <p>The finance team are set up and working well remotely, the OfS have provided assurance that our income stream is intact, and we continue to maintain high cash levels.</p> <p>The main financial risk is regarding our student accommodation contract with Scape and could find us liable to pay costs of £310k. The events team have been redeployed into recruitment and sessional staff contracts are being looked at with a view to reducing costs here. Capital expenditure will carry on with SITS as this is critical to the institution.</p> <p>A number of possible cost reductions have been identified, and further savings could be put in place, but an analysis is ongoing. As things evolve we will review the numbers and will provide the upcoming Emergency Committee meeting with a fuller picture but there may</p>

	<p>be a risk of hitting a deficit next year.</p> <p>ACTION: To keep the board informed of updated situation and provide this information to the Emergency Committee meeting.</p>
	MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
20/1198	<p>In response to comments received at the previous board meeting, a mental health and wellbeing report was produced. Details of the report were discussed in full at the recent HR and Remuneration Committee, and it was outlined that this report gave some context on the situation nationally and also what is going on within universities and Ravensbourne alike. More work is to be done on this, and it was also requested that a plan for student metal health and wellbeing should also be developed.</p> <p>ACTION: To develop a Mental Health and Wellbeing plan for students.</p>
	GOVERNING DOCUMENTS
20/1199	<p>The proposed changes that had been put forward were approved with no comments or objections noted.</p>
	COMMITTEE SUMMARIES
20/1200	<p>There were no written summaries included in the papers.</p> <p>Verbal updates regarding the Audit Committee were noted, and that in the Risk Register the COVID-19 situation should no longer be logged as a risk, but is now an issue. The executive team are implementing plans to deal with the issues as they arise. It is highly likely that this will have a knock on effect on the year end audit so this will need to be kept under review.</p> <p>It was noted that the work of the Diversity Committee needs to be reviewed regularly by the Audit Committee</p>
	FUTURE MEETINGS
20/1201	<p>The away day planned for 6th May will not take place but instead a board meeting will be scheduled for that day, so the board were asked to still keep this date free. Further information will be communicated in due course.</p>
20/1202	<p>The September board date will be used instead for an away day so the board were asked to keep this date free. It was suggested that the board review some of the academic curriculum at this away day.</p>
20/1203	<p>The Chair passed on special thanks to David Worthington for all his contributions over the last 6 years, which was reinforced by the rest of the board members.</p>