

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the unreserved meeting of the Board of Governors on Wednesday 11 November from 5 - 7pm via remote video conference

Present	In attendance	Apologies
Andrew Summers (Chair) Andy Cook Kion Ahadi Zaid Al-Zaidy Kate Gregory Helen Higson Jon Kingsbury Katharina Koall Fernando Modino Lisa Mooney Alex Phillips Marta Phillips Noeline Sanders Samantha Silver Jo Stimpson Jon Walmsley Lee Wilkinson Stephen Woodford	Margaret Bird- Director of HR & OD Phil MacDonald (Interim Director of Finance) John O'Boyle- Director of Compliance Gary Pritchard- Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching and Student Experience) Drew Robinson - Director Projects & Operations Emma Shailer- Director of Student Recruitment & Success Maureen Skinner – Clerk to the Board of Governors (minutes) Daniel Croyle (Associate Programme Director FE) for item on FE	Shoku Amirani Lawrence Zeegen

20/1309	<p>The Chair welcomed members. Daniel Croyle was welcomed for the item on Further Education.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Shoku Amirani and Lawrence Zeegen. The Chair asked to send the Board's best wishes to Lawrence during his extended sick leave.</p> <p>Following the earlier joint meeting with Academic Board, the Chair asked for any additional ideas on developing links between the Board or Governors and the Academic Board.</p>
	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
20/1310	<p>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.</p>
	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
20/1311	<p>All matters arising had either been covered off or were on the agenda for this meeting.</p>
	CHAIR'S UPDATE
20/1312	<p>The Chair reported that recruitment across the sector had improved, although, like at Ravensbourne, much attention was being paid to retention. The HE Minister had recommended to institutions that they seek to end the academic term by 9 December. This had already been agreed at RUL, along with a delayed start in January 2021.</p>
20/1313	<p>He reported that Nous Consulting had been engaged to revive/refresh the university's strategy. Nous personnel will be in touch to arrange focus group meetings with governors.</p>
20/1314	<p>He advised the Board that full agreement to the new University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer appointment had been received and Board agreement is now complete. The selected candidate will start early in the new year.</p>
	VC REPORT
20/1315	<p>The Vice Chancellor introduced his report by outlining key developments including managing the COVID challenge whilst trying to grow the university, the Digital First initiative and the Institute for Creativity and Technology. He recorded his thanks to staff for their commitment during these challenging times.</p> <p>Facilities management had been reviewed by Finance Committee. In response to a query on the management of the interface between three contractors, the VC advised that the Estates and Facilities team had been strengthened. Moreover, service levels had been agreed with the new contractors and some of the former Engie staff had been subject to TUPE. The following expenditure was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Management: M&E: Pareto £239,818; Cleaning: Churchill £281,378; Security: Unitrust £103,194
20/1316	<p><i>The Institute for Creativity and Technology</i></p>

20/1317	<p>The Institute for Creativity and Technology lease had been subject to scrutiny by a sub-set of board. A 10 year lease, with a three year break point, had been agreed. Eversheds had provided legal advice during the contract development process. Fit-out had been awarded to Troy. The building will be the home of the graduate school. The VC and Director of Operations will provide governors with material relating to the new building. A 12 week fit-out will commence in January 2021. The aim is to be able to occupy the building by April 2021.</p> <p>The board formally approved the following expenditure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute for Creativity & Technology: Knight Dragon 10-year lease; fit-out: Troy £1,188,808 • Annual rent (Year 1 - £56k; Years 2-10 - £401K p.a. + RPI) <p>Action: update on the Institute to Board of Governors March 2021</p> <p>Action: material on new building to be circulated to members</p> <p><i>Digital First</i></p> <p>The VC reported that two new appointments had been made to support this initiative: Programme Manager and Enterprise Architect. Two partners had been identified: Mastered and Skills Union. Early activities include the first year of a two year hybrid degree with Mastered and a series of boot camps with Skills Union. A further update will be provided at the next Board meeting in January 2021.</p> <p>Action: further update on Digital First to next Board meeting</p> <p>In discussion the following issues were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of the reduction of engagement with schools and colleges • The arrangements in place to cover Professor Zeegen’s absence, including post-graduate developments • The VC responded on the interim arrangements including the deployment of various members of staff to cover for Professor Zeegen • The resulting integration of undergraduate and postgraduate activities, which might enable further use of postgraduates in undergraduate teaching
STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION	
20/1318	<p>The Director of Recruitment and Student Success gave a presentation on student recruitment and retention. This was similar to the presentation given to the Finance committee in October. Recruitment was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE 291 against a target of 300 • UG 961 against a target of 968 • International 57 against a target of 50 • Postgraduate 57 against a target of 100 (for January 2021 starts) <p>The importance of the pipeline was noted ie from FE to HE and Year 0 courses. Recruitment was a result of business as usual, clearing and new courses, all of which played a part.</p>
20/1319	<p>A number of measures had been put in place to enhance student retention: attendance monitoring, the new student retention and success group, and the emphasis on the student voice. Developments in the CRM system included early warning signs, student intranet and a community blog.</p>

20/1320	<p>It was noted that the demographic dip had now reached the bottom, with a rising population of 18 year olds from now on. The outreach team had devised other solutions to connect with schools and colleges during the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>Members noted the need to track retention data regularly and to recognise that ‘drop out’ was both a personal tragedy as well as a financial loss. Life chances were worse for these students than if they had never embarked on a course of higher education.</p>
	FURTHER EDUCATION
20/1321	<p>The Associate Programme Director for Further Education gave a presentation on FE. Students following the Foundation Diploma in Art & Design (awarded by the University of the Arts London) could opt for creative practice, fashion promotion, fashion and textiles, media production or visual design communication. Further opportunities lie in Access programmes and Year 0 courses. These programmes include diagnostic stages and developmental opportunities. Male/female ratios are 30/70 and internal progression is 25%, rising to 50% for Access courses. Progression from FE to HE can be as high as 80%, particularly during the pandemic.</p> <p>Members raised the issue of the value of further education, and particularly its importance for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Daniel Croyle for the presentation.</p>
	FINANCE UPDATE INCLUDING ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN
20/1322	<p>The Interim Director of Finance asked members to note the position after two months. Good recruitment had delivered a surplus of £250k on fees. It was too early to note any specific variations to budget although the restructuring budget will be under pressure. The budget is a 19K operating surplus for 2020-21 with a £1.4m overall operating deficit. Not all the budget for Digital First might be spent during this year. Capital expenditure is in line with discussions on the Institute, Digital First and the SITS project.</p>
20/1323	<p>The Board confirmed the budget for 2020-21, as per the previous meeting, with only minor changes. There are no changes to income and expenditure.</p>
20/1324	<p>Comments on the budget included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of Digital First on the budget • It was noted that Digital First was intended to break even within three years but this might now stretch to four/five years • It was unlikely that all the planned capital expenditure on Digital First would occur <p>The Board approved Audit Committee annual report for 2019-20, and noted the Internal Audit annual report for 2019-20 and the External Audit post-audit management report.</p>
	ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
20/1325	<p>The Annual Report and Financial Statements 2019-20 had been extensively audited and considered by both the Finance and the Audit committees. There was a £47k operating surplus. The section on Risk had been substantially revised to reduce the number of core</p>

<p>20/1326</p>	<p>risks to four: COVID-19, students (recruitment, retention and satisfaction), infrastructure and technology, and financial sustainability. More information of risk mitigation was included. The Chair of Audit committee reported on the joint session with Finance committee and the auditors.</p> <p>The Chair of Finance Committee reported on a full review of the financial statements and concluded that the accounts were in good shape. Some concern had been raised on the balance in the Vice Chancellor’s report relating to the NSS and this had been addressed. Another question related to the rise in staff costs against a reduction in FTEs. This had been as a result of investment in executive posts, which was accepted.</p> <p>The Board meeting for Ravensbourne Ltd had taken place earlier and those financial statements had been approved, subject to the same assurance letter as for Ravensbourne University accounts.</p>
<p>20/1327</p>	<p>The Annual Report and Financial Statements were approved.</p>
<p>LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION</p>	
<p>20/1328</p>	<p>The Letters of Representation for Ravensbourne University were approved and the Letters of Representation for Ravensbourne Ltd, as well as the letters of assurance for both Ravensbourne University and Ravensbourne Ltd were noted.</p>
<p>COMMITTEE REPORTS</p>	
<p>20/1329</p>	<p><i>Finance Committee</i> The Chair drew members attention to the approval of the Tuition Fee schedule for 2021-22. The Board was asked to note the increases in both postgraduate and international fees in line with competitors in the sector.</p> <p><i>Audit Committee</i> The Chair noted that there was still an outstanding internal audit report, which had yet to be signed off. The change in lead internal auditor was noted due to a potential conflict for the former lead auditor, but the Chair was still awaiting a face to face meeting with the new head of internal audit.</p> <p><i>OD and Remuneration</i> The Chair reported on the staff survey and the emergence of staff fatigue during the pandemic, but noted that staff felt supported by management. The Race Action plan was welcomed with a more holistic approach noted. Good work had been undertaken on sessional staff costs.</p> <p><i>Academic Board</i> The summary report was noted.</p>
<p>COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY DEADLINES</p>	
<p>20/1330</p>	<p>Audit committee had asked for a schedule of regulatory reutrns due to a deadline having been missed previously.</p> <p>Action: Audit committee to receive map of compliance returns periodically</p>

	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING
20/1331	The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 27 January 2021 at 4pm-7pm.