

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the unreserved meeting of the Board of Governors on Wednesday 13 July 2022 from 4-7pm in the Board Room at Ravensbourne and by video link

### Present

Andrew Summers (Chair)  
Andy Cook (Vice Chancellor)  
Kion Ahadi (Independent member)  
Zaid Al-Zaidy (Independent member) (remote)  
Shoku Amirani (Independent member) (remote)  
Richard Bee (Independent member)  
Lizbeth Goodman (Independent member)  
Kate Gregory (Independent member)  
Helen Higson (Independent member)  
Chiz Nwaosu (Staff member)  
Paul O'Grady (Independent member)  
Noeline Sanders (Independent member)  
Zahra Shahsavari (Student Union President)  
Alberto Villanueva (Staff member)  
Lee Wilkinson (Independent member) (remote)  
Stephen Woodford (Independent member)

### In attendance

Christopher Costigan – University Secretary & Chief Compliance Officer  
Lawrence Lartey – Director of Innovation, Industry and Enterprise (remote)  
Phil MacDonald – Director of Finance (remote)  
Andy Rees – Dean  
Simon Robertshaw – Deputy Vice Chancellor  
Emma Shailer - Director of Student Recruitment & Success  
Derek Yates – Interim Head of Design

Ceewhy Ochoga - Student Union Manager  
Julian Rowland – Student Union Vice President

Maureen Skinner – Clerk to the Board of Governors (minutes)

### Apologies

22/20	The Chairman welcomed Chiz Nwaosu to his first Board meeting as staff governor. He also welcomed the members of the Students' Union, and Derek Yates who would provide an update on the discussions at the strategy day.
22/21	<p>Prior to the formal meeting, Derek Yates provided an update on the presentation and discussions at the strategy day held in May. He explained about building on the language of 'create the change into everything'. The proposition is being built into Ravensbourne values: relevant, connected, professional (new addition), dynamic, transformative and inclusive. The brand proposal is being developed via padlet.</p> <p>Members made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good that the brand initiative is working throughout Ravensbourne and that it will impact on all activities</li> <li>• A great brand is very important for all staff and students</li> <li>• What is the plan for implementation and how to embed throughout the organisation</li> <li>• The VC is working with a PR company to create brand messages</li> <li>• This is not a marketing exercise but a cultural one</li> <li>• The addition of 'professional' was important</li> <li>• Why was a PR company being used if there was internal expertise</li> <li>• The PR company is working on external audiences; there are limited resources internally</li> <li>• Students may not have external reach eg national press</li> <li>• New academic contracts will include scholarship time</li> <li>• The high profile alumni are not widely known about, including by students (eg alumni working at Apple, Google and Nike)</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the next Board meeting would consider the operationalisation plan.</p>
<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b>	
22/22	Members were reminded to declare any interests, personal or financial, that might relate to the business shown on the agenda for the meeting. No additional declarations were made.
<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
22/23	<p>The minutes were approved.</p> <p>Minute 22/11: this is partially complete. The APP amendment has been done and the university is in further dialogue with the SLC. There are staffing implications. A partnership officer is required as well as academic staff in the business area.</p> <p>Minute 22/13: KPMG have not been contacted specifically on this. However, desk research has revealed that Ravensbourne's VfM statement is in line with several other comparable institutions.</p>

	<b>CHAIR'S UPDATE</b>
<b>22/24</b>	The Chairman reported that Jon Walmsley had left the Board as he had been appointed to the Board of Hertfordshire University. Thus there was a vacancy for a Chair of the OD and Remuneration Committee. It was hoped that an appointment would be made for September. There was little to report on national policy as the government was in a state of flux. There was a new Education Secretary, James Cleverly, the third in a week.
<b>22/25</b>	There was no further movement on the appointment of a Chancellor. He reported that Governance and Nominations committee had recommended the extension of the term of the Deputy Chair of Governors, Helen Higson, who had left the meeting, to the full nine years. This was to provide continuity for a range of new strategic developments, such as the partnership with Oxford Business College. The Board agreed to the extension of Helen Higson's appointment for the full nine years.
<b>22/26</b>	The Chairman left the meeting and the Deputy Chair took over the chair. The Chairman's first term of office ends in October and she proposed that the Chairman's appointment be renewed for a further three years, in line with the recommendation from the Governance and Nominations committee. The Vice Chancellor agreed, adding that the Chairman had provided the right balance of support and challenge, and that he had been instrumental in helping develop the strategy. The Board agreed that the Chairman's term of office be renewed for a further three years.
	<b>VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT</b>
<b>22/27</b>	The Vice Chancellor reported that two new major contracts had been signed with Oxford Business College and Oxford International Education Group. The university had lost £1m in government funding as a result of cuts in arts funding and the loss of London weighting. There was still much uncertainty in the aftermath of COVID. There had been significant restructuring and £1m had been taken out of staff costs. [REDACTED] There had been modest improvements in the NSS and the university's first submission to the REF showed some encouraging signs.
<b>22/28</b>	<p>There had been a successful degree show as well as a number of high profile student successes. All courses had been revalidated within the CAF. He praised the work of academic staff and the quality team. Good work had been undertaken on the brand and new partnerships had been developed.</p> <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There had been some difficult decisions on the budget</li> <li>• The need to ensure there were adequate resources to support the new partnerships</li> <li>• It was pleasing to note the student successes</li> <li>• Whether applications were being converted more successfully</li> <li>• There was a better pipeline for applicants</li> <li>• Important to note the volatility of the market</li> <li>• Application rate to acceptance rate could be better</li> <li>• The 30% increase in applications in January had translated into a 10% increase in acceptances</li> <li>• All institutions are competing for the same market</li> <li>• There are a large number of outstanding decisions although the key date is 14 July</li> <li>• The reject rate is a lot higher this year</li> <li>• There are concerns about Chinese students' ability to travel, although additional local recruitment might compensate</li> </ul>

<p><b>22/29</b></p> <p><b>22/30</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications are still continuing</li> <li>• The percentage of graduates in highly skilled employment has reduced</li> <li>• The CAF includes a very important placement element</li> <li>• It is very important that governors support important activities, such as the degree show</li> </ul> <p><i>Oxford International Education Group update</i></p> <p>The Vice Chancellor reported that the partnership with Oxford International Education Group was a very important development alongside the partnership with Oxford Business College, where there would be three intakes for four programmes: digital marketing, MBA, computer science and cyber security. OIEG have a network of 3000 agents globally. There is a big market for one year postgraduate programmes which might qualify for a post study work visa. There would be a scaling up of resources to support these new developments: academic, admissions, registry, UKVI, and English language support. The risks are: recruitment, UKVI, staff recruitment, space utilisation, cultural integration, student support and wellbeing, as well as the risks of not doing this.</p> <p>It was noted that the agents are working for a number of institutions with similar courses, although other institutions may have capped numbers. There may be accommodation problems, notwithstanding the use of halls of residence. There are new student residences being built near Ravensbourne by a commercial company. The aim will be to recruit as diverse a staff base as possible, particularly in the fields of business and computing.</p> <p>The Board approved the OIEG plan.</p>
	<p><b>RSU UPDATE</b></p>
<p><b>22/31</b></p> <p><b>22/32</b></p>	<p>The SU President was congratulated on her re-election, as was Julian Rowland as Vice President. The new SU Manager was also congratulated on her appointment. The SU President highlighted the importance of a new space for the SU. It had been a difficult year but the appointment of a new manager was very good news. An organisational review had been carried out. The aim was to empower the student voice, rebuild communities and restructure the SU.</p> <p>The SU Manager noted the importance of the NSS and the ways that the SU might improve scores. The university values are very important to the student community and will help enhance the experience. She thanked the VC and the DVC for their support. It was noted the SU budget had been cut. If student numbers increase the SU will need additional resource. Members asked if there was any form of sponsorship available to the SU. They have looked at income generating opportunities. The RSU plans align with the NSS plans. The use of space in the public areas for student activities would be beneficial. It is important that the SU brand is consistent with the university brand in the reception area.</p>
	<p><b>2022-2023 BUDGET</b></p>
<p><b>22/33</b></p>	<p>The Director of Finance introduced the budget. He noted that despite a reduced grant from OfS and lower than expected student enrolments, [REDACTED] It was noted that the budget had been considered by the Finance committee and recommended to the Board, and the Chair of the Finance committee endorsed the budget as a fair reflection of the current position. The budget, if approved, would be a firm budget cascaded to budget holders, but would need final confirmation in October following the outcome of the student recruitment round, which could end in a more positive position. The contingency built into the</p>

22/34	<p>budget to allow for issues was commended and the VC noted current activity around retrievals and ongoing activity through the CAF to improve retention and progression.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the OBC contract has a minimum level of funding to ensure that core university costs are covered should they underrecruit; although it was noted that the expectation was that they would recruit significantly more and so the challenge being considered was how to support growth, rather than to manage under recruitment.</p> <p>The budget was approved.</p>
	<b>RISK REGISTER</b>
22/35	<p>The Board noted the risk register. Although the majority of risks were red, it was highlighted that only principal risks were brought to the committee to focus their efforts.</p>
	<b>SCHEME OF DELEGATION</b>
22/36	<p>It was noted the scheme had been considered by Finance committee and Governance and Nominations committee. The scheme was approved, subject to some minor alterations regarding the approval limit for op-ex, to match cap-ex limits; and a higher approval requirement for research bids which may come with significant overheads.</p>
	<b>HONORARY AWARDS SUB-COMMITTEE</b>
22/37	<p>It was noted that the terms of reference had been considered and approved by the Governance and Nominations committee and the Academic Board and were put to the Board for final sign-off. Meetings would typically be held once per annum and members would come from a cross-section of the Ravensbourne community. The terms of reference were approved.</p>
	<b>BYLAWS FOR ONLINE MEETINGS</b>
22/38	<p>The Board approved the amendment to enable meetings to be online and hybrid as well as face to face, to ensure compliance with charity law. The Chair noted that it was still intended to hold full Board meetings face to face; but committees would likely be online or hybrid. The proposal to remove the joint meeting with the academic board was discussed. It was noted that removing the requirement would not preclude a joint meeting; that two members of the board attended the Academic Board and that the summary of each meeting came to the Board for information. The Chair noted that the intention was not to reduce oversight by the Board, but to enable consideration of different and better ways to engage with the Board's obligations under the conditions of registration. The Board approved the amendment.</p>

	<b>APP AMENDMENT APPROVAL</b>
<b>22/39</b>	The Dean outlined that the reason for this amendment was in response to the new Director of Fair Access's change in emphasis to engagement with schools and that the whole sector was required to submit an APP amendment. It was noted that a consultation was expected over the summer and that a new APP would then need to be written. It was noted that the APP was now academically owned and the Dean was favourable about the opportunity that a new APP brought, as it gave a chance to realign the targets with the current strategy. The Board approved the APP.
	<b>PAPERS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEES</b>
<b>22/40</b>	The matters for noting and short comment were noted and the committee memberships were approved. The papers considered by committees were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy policy (Governance and Nominations)</li> <li>• Safeguarding report (Governance and Nominations)</li> <li>• Committee membership (Governance and Nominations)</li> </ul>
	<b>COMMITTEE SUMMARIES</b>
<b>22/41</b>	The following committee summaries were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and Nominations committee 18 May 2022</li> <li>• Audit committee 25 May 2022</li> <li>• Finance committee 29 June 2022</li> </ul>
	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
<b>22/42</b>	There was no any other business.
	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS</b>
<b>22/43</b>	The next meeting of the Board of Governors will be held on Wednesday 14 September 2022 from 4-7pm at Ravensbourne University.