

(M 10/ 062– M 10/ 120)

Royal Holloway
University of London

COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council
held on 31st March 2010**

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| Present: | Mr A Alway Mr D M Beever Sir Andrew Burns Mr P Blagbrough Professor C Bradley Mr S Cooksey Professor F Driver Professor M Fowler Mrs E Horwood Professor R Kemp Mr J Lerche | Mr A Martin Cllr H W V Meares Mr J Pidgeon Mr J R Potts Mr W F Rooke Mr I G Ross Ms B Shorter Mrs G Stuart Dr E Sullivan Mrs J Walker Mr A Wiltshire |
| Apologies: | Professor P Beesley Mr S Bland Mr R Buswell Professor R Deem Mrs S Tyacke | Dean of Faculty of Science Director of Facilities Management Dean of the Faculty of History & Social Science |
| With: | Ms K Kerr Miss C Munton | College Secretary & Head of Governance Governance Assistant |
| In attendance: | Professor A Tickell Professor G Ward Professor Katie Normington Ms Susan Kay Mr G Robinson | Vice-Principal (Research, Enterprise & Communications) Vice-Principal (Planning & Resources) Dean of Faculty of Arts Head of Strategic Development Director of Finance |
| Observers: | Professor J Frank Mrs M Reilly | Observer on behalf of UCU PA to College Secretary |

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no membership changes to note. 10/62

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited members to indicate if they had a conflict of interest with any of the agenda items. None of the members indicated a conflict. 10/63

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd February 2010 (M10/001 to M10/61) were signed as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on 19th March 2010 were approved. 10/64

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1. Appointment of the Principal

Professor Paul Layzell would be starting in post on 16th August 2010 and would be available for meetings from late April 2010. The current management team would continue with the full confidence of the incoming Principal and the Council until the middle of August. 10/65

5. UNSTARRING OF ITEMS

The following item was un-starred for discussion during the meeting: 10/66
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Item 20 – Paper CL/10/41 Oral Update on Nominations & Honorary Awards Committee

PART A: MAJOR ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6. ACTING PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Council received the Acting Principal's report (CL/10/27). The Acting Principal reported with sadness the death of David Vilaseca, Professor of Hispanic Studies and Critical Theory in the School of Modern Languages. A memorial service for Professor Vilaseca was held in the Picture Gallery on 24th March 2010. 10/67

The National Student Survey was underway and would remain open until the end of April. The Acting Principal thanked members of the Students Union, academic departments and central services for their work in publicising the survey, which had so far resulted in an institutional response rate of 57%, exceeding the 50% threshold required. The Survey focuses on academic experiences in contrast to the International Student Barometer (ISB) which 10/68

focuses on all aspects of student life. The International Student Barometer results for RHUL were not as good as for some competitor institutions but were starting to show positive results in areas where RHUL has made targeted investment responses to areas of weakness indicated by previous results. For example the latest ISB results put RHUL in first place for email and internet facilities and in third place for IT support services.

On 12th March the Acting Principal attended the opening preview reception for the current stage of the Picture Gallery Tour at the Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach, Florida. The Acting Principal and Vice Principal (Research, Enterprise and Communication) had a rewarding meeting with Preston Bryant, an RHUL alumnus, indicating there were opportunities to expand alumni fundraising in the USA. 10/69

RHUL hosted a Science Open Day on 27th February. The Open Day was a great success and the Acting Principal expressed thanks to all involved. The Council formally thanked the Science Departments involved in organising the Open Day. 10/70

7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

7.1. The Council received an update on the financial outturn for 2009-10 (CL/10/28). The summary of the forecast financial outturn for 2009-10 showed a surplus of c. £4.8m largely because the student fee income exceeded the planned income and it was therefore not necessary to use the contingency fund. It had provisionally been decided not to set a contingency for fee income in 2010-11. 10/71

The Voluntary Severance programme was ongoing with some cases still being considered. To date there were approximately 20 staff taking voluntary severance and costs were within budget. Approximately 15 applications from academic service staff were on hold pending the outcome of the Planning For Change review of academic services. It was therefore possible that the total number of voluntary severance agreements could increase to 35 which would still fall within the allocated contingency. 10/72

7.2. The Council received a paper on the 2010 HEFCE Grant Letter (CL/10/29). 10/73

The letter indicated that RHUL could expect around a 1% cut in cash terms for 2010-11. The letter showed only a provisional allocation of funding for 2010-11. Further cuts were possible in 2010/11 as the period from April 2011 – July 2011 would fall in new funding year. There were strong indications that additional cuts in funding were likely and a provision of 0.6m would be made in the budget. It was noted that the risk to the 2010-11 budget if a new government was elected was unknown. 10/74

The College had a higher than average decrease in funding because HEFCE had withdrawn targeted allocations for historic buildings and transitional funding for ELQ students had ended. 10/75

It was noted that HEFCE had protected the core funding for universities by making cuts in capital and special funding areas. Any further cuts in funding would be likely to come from core funding. 10/76

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Extra university places had been announced in the recent budget but full details had yet to be confirmed. 10/77

It was noted that HEFCE had amended the weightings for allocating research funding whilst simultaneously protecting the grant for STEM disciplines. The effect was likely to be neutral for Royal Holloway. The timing for the first Research Excellence Framework process was unsure but submissions would need to be of a 3* and 4* standard to maximise the income and reputation of the College. Concerns had been raised amongst the academic staff that a smaller number of staff would have work submitted to the REF. There was clearly a need for consistency and transparency and an equality code of practice would be submitted to the Academic Board. 10/78
10/79

8. PROFESSORIAL BANDING

The Council received an oral update from the Vice Principal (Planning and Resources) on progress with the banding of professorial staff (CL/10/30). 10/80

The Vice Principal thanked Council and UCU for their work on this project. The Senior Management team were continuing to meet with the UCU and there would be a further report at the Council meeting on 23rd June. It was noted that UCU had not seen the latest revisions to the documentation and that a revised time line for implementation was being developed. However there was still confidence that the main arrangements would be finalised and implemented by July 2010. 10/81

The importance of making the project affordable for the College was stressed and any extra costs would need to be met by making savings elsewhere. The management team reiterated that this was not a cost cutting exercise and the College was committed to remedying the gender pay gap whilst staying within budget. 10/82

Concerns were raised over the long term affect on pension costs if salaries were greatly increased. 10/83

It was noted that the Vice Principal had sought legal advice on the legality of reducing Professorial pay in some cases if the new proposals suggested that it was necessary. Further clarification was needed but it was likely that it would be necessary to proceed with reducing salaries to defend the College against equal pay claims. It was also noted that UCU were obtaining their own legal advice but this had not yet been received. Concern was expressed that red circling pay would have a detrimental effect on morale amongst academic staff. The Vice Principal again emphasised that the review of the Professorial banding was not a cost cutting exercise but an exercise to ensure fairness and retain motivation amongst the Professoriate. Under the proposals any member of staff who was red circled would receive a pay freeze for 2 years and be able to have their case reviewed on an annual basis. 10/84

9. STRATEGIC PLANNING

9.1 Planning for Change

The Council received a paper detailing progress with the Planning for Change programme (CL/10/31). 10/85

Additional funding cuts were anticipated in future years. With rising costs and restrictions in student numbers, the College would need to make savings of at least 10% by 2013 if there were to be any opportunity for investment in growth areas. 10/86

The Planning for Change programme was launched to address the need for savings and comprises two phases, A and B. The programme would review three main areas: academic footprint, professional services departments and HR policies and support for cultural and process change. Phase A was intended to achieve the maximum possible savings without any structural change, primarily through the voluntary severance programme and non replacement of retiring staff. However it would only achieve around half of the necessary savings by 2012-13. Phase B would have the longer term aim of generating the rest of the savings and would involve more structural change. The management team assured Council that they would discuss planned structural changes with the College stakeholders, including the Unions. It was expected the timing of Phase B would be in line with the appointment of the new Principal. 10/87

Council emphasised the need for the College's projected budgets to be as accurate and robust as possible before they could be signed off. The senior management team assured Council that only guaranteed savings would be included in the College's projected budget. 10/88

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| | It was noted that the research grant figures were cautious and RHUL tended to overachieve on overhead research income targets illustrating the strength of the academic staff in the institution. Council were encouraged to hear of the three major awards recently given to staff in the Physics, Psychology and Italian department. | 10/89 |
| 9.2 | Value for Money | 10/90 |
| | The Council received a paper on Value for Money (CL/10/32). | 10/91 |
| | The College's Strategic Plan had 4 strategic themes and 4 enabling themes to meet HEFCE's requirements for Value for Money. The paper had been requested by the Audit and Compliance Committee to provide assurance on this matter and was commended by the Chair of the Committee. | 10/92 |
| | The Council were made aware of the improvement in the 2008-09 Super Key Performance Indicator result relating to the National Student Survey. A "Student Experience Working Group" was set up with the aim of improving the student experience at low cost to the institution. Students had reported that as a result of this working group positive changes had been made including an extension of library opening hours. Maire Davies was thanked for her work on this project and it was confirmed that the initiative would continue in future years. | 10/93 |
| | Clarification was sought on the College's decision to rationalise the post-graduate course taught portfolio so that courses would no longer run where there was insufficient demand. The courses had been withdrawn in good time so the College would not need to withdraw offers already made to applicants. | 10/94 |
| 10. INTERNAL AUDIT | | |
| 10.1 | The Council received paper (CL/10/33) on progress with outstanding actions from Internal Audit reports. | 10/95 |
| | The Audit and Compliance Committee had raised concerns over the number of outstanding actions from Internal Audit recommendations, some of which dated back several years, and had asked that these be brought to the attention of Council. The Committee was aiming to exact greater discipline on College management over audit recommendations, which had not been treated sufficiently seriously in the past. In future it would be expected that all fundamental issues would be addressed within three months and significant issues within six to nine months. | 10/96 |

The Acting Principal confirmed that the Management Co-ordination Group had now been tasked with overseeing all Internal Audit actions and ensuring their completion in a timely manner. It was expected that additional focus on management responses to reports and on managing the actions would avoid problems of this kind occurring in future. The outstanding items would be completed promptly and reported to the next Audit and Compliance Committee meeting. 10/97

New audit activities started by the College included the arrangements made with SWAN and the Picture Tour. The Management Co-ordination Group and the Internal Auditor were working closely to ensure satisfactory outcomes were achieved in a timely manner. 10/98

The senior management team were pleased to inform Council that the College had appointed a new Energy Manager. 10/99

11. CHANGES TO THE STUDENT DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS AND GENERAL REGULATIONS

The Council received revised two amendments to the Student Disciplinary Regulations (CL/10/34) 10/100

Council

APPROVED

the changes to the regulations

An update was provided on the College's existing policy towards alcohol, drug and substance misuse. Alcohol was seen as a larger problem than drugs and was common thread in recently reported assault cases. The College was acting on this by ensuring alcohol could only be bought on College premises at regulated times, ensuring enough bouncers were available and drinking areas were restricted. Discussions on alcohol related issues were ongoing and the Students' Union and Student Advisory Services had been working closely to raise awareness amongst students of alcohol related issues. The current SU team would ensure the incoming team were given a full handover on the issues. 10/101

The Council received changes to General Regulations numbers 1 -Alcohol, drug and substance misuse and 21 – Criminal Convictions ((CL/10/34).. 10/102

Council

APPROVED

the changes to the regulations.

12. DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2010/11

Council discussed the option of organising an off campus meetings at Cumberland Lodge but noted the proposed 2010-11 dates. 10/103

PART B: ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL

13. REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Council noted that the Chairman of Council had agreed to a variation to the constitution of the interview panel for the Deputy Dean of HSS on 16 March 2010, 10/104

14. REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CIRCULATION

The Council noted that no decisions had been taken by circulation since the last meeting. 10/105

15. ACADEMIC BOARD

The Council noted that the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board, held on 17 March 2010 would be available at the Council meeting on 23 June 2010. 10/106

16. AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

The Council noted the minutes of the Audit & Compliance Committee, held on 26 February 2010. 10/107

17. ESTATES COMMITTEE

The Council received the minutes of the meeting of the Estates Committee, held on 9 October 2009. 10/108

18. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Council noted the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee, held on 9 February 2010. 10/109

19. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The Council received the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources and Equal Opportunities Committee, held on 17 November 2009, and 9 February 2010. 10/110

20. NOMINATIONS AND HONORARY AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Council noted that the minutes of the Nominations and Honorary Awards Committee, held on 18 February 2010 would be available at the Council meeting on 23 June 2010. 10/111

It was noted that a Council effectiveness review would be undertaken and as part of this a questionnaire would be distributed to all members. 10/112

The Council noted that a one year extension had been given on David Beever's term of office. The Chair of Council and Vice Chair of Council's terms of office would now end around the same time and arrangements to manage this were under consideration by a sub group of the Nominations and Honorary Awards Committee. 10/113

Skills areas for future Lay Members of Council had been identified by the Committee and advertising for members would take place in the local press. 10/114

It was noted that nominations for 2010 Honorary Fellowships and Awards would be discussed at the Council meeting in June. 10/115

21. STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Council received the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee held on 19 March 2010. 10/116

22. COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

The Council noted that the Council Executive Committee met informally on 19 March 2010. 10/117

23. FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The Council noted that a student meeting was cancelled on 3 February 2010 by the College Secretary and Head of Governance in accordance with Paragraph 9 of the College's Freedom of Speech Policy. 10/118

24. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council noted that no documents had been sealed since the last meeting. 10/119

25. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

5.00pm on Wednesday 23 June 2010 10/120

Katie Kerr
College Secretary and Head of Governance