

Ruskin College

GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the five hundred and sixty-fourth meeting of the Governing Executive held on Friday 11th May 2012 at 11.00am at Ruskin College, Walton Street, Oxford (Raph Samuel Hall)

Present:	In attendance:
Chris Baugh John Fray Jo Morris Doug Nicholls (part) Carole Orgell-Rosen John Raftery (part) Pearl Ryall Alan Shepherd Marva Small Liz Mathews Des McDermott Audrey Mullender Teresa Munby Kieron Winters Geraldine Sherratt	Helen Jeffries (minutes) Chris Wilkes

PART A

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| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Wendy Dawson, Jane Dixon, Roger McKenzie, David Norman and Sally Courtney. Apologies for lateness were received from Doug Nicholls and John Raftery.
Absent
Anne Hock and Colin Taylor were absent without apologies. | Action |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
Noted: that no member present declared any interest, financial or otherwise, relating to any item on the agenda. | |
| 3 | Minutes
Confirmed: as a correct record the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on Friday 9 th March 2012. | |
| 4 | Matters arising
Noted: a question from Alan Shepherd regarding item 9.2 and the level of funding from the SFA.
The General Secretary replied that as long as the College met its targets for 2011/12, the extra money would be consolidated into the 2012/13 financial year. | |
| | Governance | |
| 5 | Search Committee | |
| 5.1 | Received: the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 25 th November 2011.
Approved: the nomination of Marva Small as a co-opted member of Council. | |

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- Noted:** the nomination to the Council of Jenny Fox, CEO of Aspire, and Kate Cocker, CEO of Crisis Skylight Oxford, by Aspire and Crisis respectively.
- Approved:** the appointment of Marva Small to the Governing Executive.
- Teresa Munby pointed out that the minutes did not specify that Lord Prescott and Andrew Smith, MP had been re-appointed as co-opted members for the academic year 2011/12.
- Agreed:** the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 25th November 2011 with an amendment making it clear that Lord Prescott and Andrew Smith, MP had been re-appointed as co-opted members for the academic year 2011/12.
- 5.2** **Received:** the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 31st January 2012.
Approved: the nomination of Colin Taylor to the Project Board.
Approved: the nomination of Wendy Dawson to the Search Committee.
Agreed: the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 31st January 2012.
- 6** **Approved:** the meeting dates for the academic year 2012/13
- 7** **Policy review**
- 7.1** **Received:** Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Postholders
- 7.2** **Received:** Grievance Procedure for Senior Postholders
- 7.3** **Received:** Guidance re. Grievances Against Senior Postholders
- 7.4** **Received:** Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- The Principal explained that almost all policies were reviewed on a three-yearly cycle. No changes were proposed to the policies before the Executive.
- Alan Shepherd queried the numbering referred to in paragraph 6.11 of the Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Postholders.
- Agreed:** that the numbering in the first line should read 6.10 as it refers to the previous paragraph.
- Learning and Teaching**
- 8** **Academic Quality and Standards Committee**
- 8.1** **Received:** Minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 16 March 2012.
- The Principal noted that the College was pleased that the BA (Hons) Social Sciences: Sociology, Politics and Economics had been revalidated with a change of title. It will in future be known as the BA (Hons) Social and Political Studies. The Principal also noted that the change to the BA (Hons) History with Social Science was due to a member of staff leaving.
- Two queries were raised regarding item 4, points d and f. It was confirmed that the students did receive a break in the afternoon and that the lack of a snack facility referred to food available to purchase (point d). It was noted that the probationary first term referred to in point f was sometimes not long enough to reach a clear view, but that it could be extended by a further term. It was felt that the current system was far better than allowing disruptive or poorly performing students to take up one full year of study at the risk of hampering other students. Des McDermott pointed out that it was the College's duty to ensure that policy reflects the well-being of the students and creates a good environment for learning.
- 8.2** **Received:** Minutes of Part A of the additional meeting held on 27th April 2012
- The Principal pointed out that this meeting arose out of the Institutional Review with the Open University Validation Service (OUVS), which recommended further work on the Self-Evaluation Document in order to obtain validation for a full further five years. The extra meeting was held to invite more discussion and thought, which would be pulled together and fed into the document by the General Secretary.

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8.3 SWOT exercise on the Self-Evaluation Document (SED) for the OUVS Institutional Review

The following points about the SED itself were noted;

- The table on page 17 was unclear.
- The external moderator was not named.
- Paragraph 60 will be outdated by September 1st 2012

A SWOT exercise was carried out. The results are attached to these minutes. The results will be fed into the revised SED.

Estates

9 Project Board

9.1 **Received:** a report from Kemp & Kemp (College land agents) on Ruskin Fields.

The Principal introduced the report as an information paper on how partnering might work, looking at different models of partnership. Whilst the College view was to wait for the Inspector's decision on the allocation or otherwise of the land for housing, it might be worthwhile to use the time as an opportunity to consider what partnering might mean to the College.

Teresa Munby raised a concern that a discussion had not yet been held on whether a partnership was needed at all. The Principal noted the concern, but pointed out that the paper was only put forward to be received by the Executive in order to continue thinking about the partnership issue, and that the Executive may require a full debate after the Public Inspections.

The Chair referred to the minutes of the 563rd meeting of the Governing Executive in which the Chair recommended the acceptance of option 2 "to agree some additional funding and go forward to the Planning Inspector's examination of the Barton Area Action Plan and/or the Sites and Housing Allocation DPD..." The current position was one of gathering information.

Finance and Risk

10 Finance Committee

10.1 **Noted:** a letter from the SFA re. Ruskin's Financial Statements 2010/11

The General Secretary noted that the letter before the Executive was in response to the three year financial plan submitted in July 2011. The letter agreed with the College's assessment.

10.2 **Received:** Draft access agreement 2013/14

The General Secretary pointed out that, in the original access agreement for 2012/13, tuition fees had been proposed at £8.5k and were subsequently revised down to £7.5k. The revised agreement was submitted in October 2011. The document was now up for annual review, but the basis was more or less the same. The proposed fee would remain the same at £7.5k.

The document set out what the College proposed to do with any additional income. The figures within the document were to change; the number of new entrants would be capped at 90.

It was noted that all the activity listed in the document was with local colleges, and an enquiry was made as to whether this was a strategic decision or necessary within the access agreement. The General Secretary replied that colleges other than those local to Ruskin could potentially be included in the document but this would simply increase the risk since it was noted that an access agreement has to be measured on evidence of what has been delivered.

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11 Audit Committee

11.1 Received: the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 23rd March 2012.

11.2 Noted: the Audit Committee's recommendation that all costs for the Capital Building Project be agreed before the end of May (item 5.1 in the minutes).

The Executive was informed that the Internal Auditors had received information that unknown variations now applied to only 12% of costs and that revisions could only be downwards since it was the College's own challenges to contractor's costings that were awaited. Hence there was no real uncertainty. The Auditors would review this in the week beginning 14th May.

Standing Items

12 Principal's report

Received: a report from the Principal.

The Principal spoke to two items in her report, the first on student ambassadors who she reported as full of zeal and numbering more than ever. The Principal pointed out that an individual needs a large amount of faith to return to study and must make a leap of confidence. This initial leap is often helped by listening to someone with experience of the College, rather than from reading a prospectus. The Principal hoped that members of the Governing Executive would also spread the word about the College.

The Principal further reported that it had been a delight to record under the QAA Code of Practice that the College would be fully accessible to disabled students in only a few months' time.

13 Student representative's report

Received: a verbal update on the work of the Ruskin Students Union.

The student representative reported that the Student Union's Treasurer now had a clear idea of the financial situation and was in a position to plan expenditure.

Plans for the Red Ball were well advanced and tickets would be issued soon. The Union had received several bids from students to attend protests and demonstrations and the Union has been pleased to be able to help with the costs of transport.

The current Union members planned to organise an election in the next few weeks in order to ensure an even flow of the work of the Union instead of the normal annual hiatus.

14 Meeting dates for 2011/12

Noted: that the remaining meeting date for this academic year was on 6th July 2012, and that that meeting would start at 9.30am to be followed by Council at 11.30am

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.45pm.

Signature of Chair.....
6 July 2012

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Agenda Item 8.3- GE/564A/paper 10

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and Governing Executive input • Links with trade unions • Externally moderated OTL • The need for the college • Retention rates-especially where students are struggling • Teaching and the people • Respect between students and staff • “Community of learning” • The Ruskin experience-support from all staff • Inclusivity • Survival through adverse climate in the past • Ability to innovate • Transform lives 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modesty • Not making the most of the respect for Ruskin that is available • Taking for granted that the wider community knows about Ruskin • Need to do more to present case studies of ordinary lives as well as major success stories
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collegiate atmosphere after the move to Headington site • Validation of high standards of teaching • Discussion on fundraising • Use of archive material • Make connections • New building-new technology • Location in Oxford • At the forefront of widening participation as Government reduces opportunities • Reinvention 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The economy • Attachment to tradition • Funding • Local bias (Oxfordshire) • Disruption of move to Headington site