

## Ruskin College

### GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

#### Minutes of the five hundred and sixty seventh meeting of the Governing Executive held on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 11.00am in Room 2.11, Ruskin College, Dunstan Road, Old Headington, Oxford, OX3 9BZ

##### Present:

Jane Dixon (ordinary member)  
John Fray (ordinary member)  
Councillor David Norman (Chair) (ordinary member)  
Carole Orgell-Rosen (Vice-Chair)(ordinary member)  
Professor John Raftery (ordinary member)  
Pearl Ryall (ordinary member)  
Dr Peter Dwyer (staff member)  
Alan Irwin (staff member)  
Guy Langton (staff member)  
Professor Audrey Mullender (Principal)(staff member)  
Kieron Winters (staff member)  
Mohammad Sharafat (student member)  
Matthew Smith (student member)

##### In attendance:

Sally Courtney (Finance Director)  
Hannah Jones (Academic Registrar) (part)  
Helen Jeffries (Clerk)  
Dr Chris Wilkes (General Secretary)

### PART A

The Chair opened the meeting by thanking members of the Governing Executive for their good wishes during his recent illness.

He then moved on to pay tribute to Jim Mortimer, a former student at Ruskin College, who had died at the age of 92. Jim Mortimer was General Secretary of the Labour Party and Chair of ACAS, the author of several books on the trade union movement and a Visiting Professor at Imperial College, London. A minutes silence followed.

- 1 **Apologies for absence and welcome new members:** Action  
Apologies were received from Professor Jane Aldgate, Chris Baugh, Professor Harriet Bradley, Councillor Van Coulter, Anne Hock, Jo Morris, Doug Nicholls, Alan Shepherd and Marva Small. Roger McKenzie and Colin Taylor were absent without apologies. *Professor John Raftery joined the meeting at 11.05am and apologised for late arrival.* It was noted that the meeting was inquorate at this point. The Chair welcomed the student governors and noted that the decision to elect them to the Governing Executive would have to be ratified at the next quorate meeting.
- 2 **Declaration of interests**  
**Noted:** that Professor John Raftery declared an interest in any item relating to the Foundation Degree in Business and Social Enterprise.
- 3&4 **Elections of Chair and Vice Chair**  
Due to the meeting being inquorate elections for Chair and Vice Chair would be held

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at a later meeting

### 5 Minutes

**Received:** the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012

**Noted:** that the minutes were approved. **To ratify at next quorate meeting of the Governing Executive**

### 6 Matters arising

**Noted:** that following the death of Lord McCarthy as reported in item 3 of the minutes of the meeting held on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2012, Ian Manborde (Programme Co-ordinator MA ILTUS) hoped to edit a Festschrift in memoriam of the late Lord McCarthy.

### 7 To ratify (due to inquorate GE/566A)

**Noted:** that all items for ratification would be taken at the next quorate meeting of the Governing Executive.

### 8 **Received:** a verbal report on the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 17 May 2013

**Noted:** that the Committee agreed the nomination of Kevin Flanagan as GMB representative to the Council.

**Noted:** that the Committee agreed the nominations of Matthew Smith and Mohammad Sharafat as student representatives to the Council.

**Noted:** that the Committee agreed the nominations of Matthew Smith and Mohammad Sharafat as student governors.

**Noted:** that the Committee agreed that the Principal would approach Councillor Van Coulter to fill the vacancy left on Audit Committee by the resignation of Jo Morris.

**Noted:** that the Search Committee was happy in principle for a student governor to sit on the Audit Committee, but that this would involve a change to the Audit Committee's terms of reference that would need to be approved by both the Search Committee and the Governing Executive.

**Noted:** that the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2013 were agreed.

**To ratify at next quorate meeting of the Governing Executive**

### 9 Policy Review

#### 9.1 **Received:** the Financial Regulations.

**Noted:** that there were no proposed changes to the Financial Regulations.

#### 9.2 **Received:** Risk Management Policy

**Noted:** that there were no proposed changes to the Risk Management Policy

#### 9.3 **Received:** Protocol for Excellence in Governance

**Noted:** that some minor changes had been made to the policy

**Noted:** that the changes were agreed

**To be ratified at the next quorate meeting of the Governing Executive**

#### 9.4 **Received:** the Whistleblowing Policy.

**Noted:** that it was agreed that the policy needed review, and that the College would

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like to assign the work to a small working party that would report to the July Governing Executive.

**Noted:** that the policy does not include links to other relevant policies and it is not clear how it works with the other policies.

**9.5 Received:** a draft Records Retention Policy and the section of the Records Retention Schedule on Student Administration.

**Noted:** that the draft policy was brought to this meeting for comment. The working party set up at the November meeting of the Governing Executive sought advice from Oxford Brookes and from Jisc at the recommendation of the National Archives.

**Noted:** that responsibility for 2(d) selection of 'a small percentage of the College's records...for permanent or long-term preservation' would require clarification in the next draft.

**Noted:** that the policy would require updating as and when changes were made to European law

**Noted:** that the term 'Core Student Data' needed a definition. This might relate to current transcripts, for example.

**Noted:** that the policy needed to specify what was meant by 'archive', and whether this was hard copy or digital. This should be kept under review.

**Noted:** that the Governing Executive would expect a further report at the July meeting.

*Hannah Jones left the meeting at 11.35am*

**10 Received:** meeting dates for the academic year 2013/14

**Noted:** the dates for meetings in 2013/14. **To be ratified at the next quorate meeting of the Governing Executive.**

## 11 Finance Committee

**11.1 Received:** the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 1 February 2013.

**11.2 Received:** the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 3 May 2013.

**Noted:** that the Chair of the Committee reported that considerable time had been spent on discussing the proposed rise in rents for residential students.

**Noted:** that the Principal wished to give further consideration to student concerns (expressed before the meeting by a peaceful demonstration outside the College) outside of the meeting.

**Noted:** that the student governors welcomed the opportunity for further discussions.

The Chair noted that the Governing Executive would wish to help students where practical to do so.

**Noted:** that the minutes should be amended at item 4 to read 'OCVC had *enquired* about 10-15 residential rooms over the summer'.

**Clerk**

**Noted:** that the café had taken more than £400 on the day of the Ruskin Arts Festival.

## 11.3 Proposed sale of 5 Stoke Place

**Noted:** that an amicable agreement had been reached with the staff member resident in the property.

**Noted:** that, under the terms of the Charities Act, a formal decision by the Governing Executive was needed in order to dispose of the property.

**Noted:** that any money from the proposed sale could either go towards paying off the bank loan and/or to increase cash flow. Any decision would need to be reached

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by the Finance Committee and Governing Executive.

**Noted:** student concerns to which the Principal responded that there was no threat to the substantive employment of the staff member, and that there would be discussions outside the meeting regarding the role of Resident Tutor and how to cover these responsibilities in future.

**Noted:** that the College could begin to market the property but that the eventual disposal of 5 Stoke Place must be approved by a quorate Governing Executive. **To be ratified at the next quorate meeting of the Governing Executive.**

### 11.4 **Received:** a report on the financial position to the end of March 2013

**Noted:** that the Finance Director reported that, overall, the performance was in line with budget and forecast.

**Noted:** that the most recent expected end-of-year position would be a loss of between £20 and 30k. The College expected to deliver the allocation from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) within this academic year, and that any shortfall would be covered by an increase in the trade union short course programme.

**Noted:** that room bookings were attracting a lot of interest, particularly from weekend students and that catering feedback had been positive. The reporting system for catering was now in place.

**Noted:** that feedback forms had not yet appeared this term. The Finance Director would work with the Head Chef to repeat the survey in the next few weeks.

### 11.5 **Received:** the draft access agreement 2014/15

**Noted:** that the agreement requires approval from the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).

**Noted:** that the agreement proposed an increase by the rate of inflation to tuition fees, and that it stated that the College would spend 30 per cent of additional fees above £6k on access. The milestones set the previous year in relation to outreach had been extended.

**Noted:** that the agreement only covered UK students in terms of fees, and that the Outreach and Recruitment Committee was working on attracting overseas students to the College.

### 11.6 **Received:** minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 16 April 2013

**Noted:** that the Audit Committee recommended to Governing Executive that a policy be drawn up on procurement.

**Noted:** that the business continuity plan required updating and that the Audit Committee recommended that the IT element of the disaster recovery plan be updated by June.

### 11.7 **Received:** Health and safety annual report

**Noted:** that the report related to 2012 and that issues had been dealt with.

**Noted:** Student concerns about health and safety in residential accommodation.

**Noted:** that the College immediately responded to most issues, but that it had taken longer to deal with one particular issue of water ingress as it had been difficult to find the origin of the problem. The Principal urged students to continue reporting issues and noted that moves of block could be made if required.

## 12 Academic Quality and Standards Committee

### 12.1 **Received:** the minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 14 December 2012

### 12.2 **Received:** the minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 26 April 2013

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- 13** **Received:** the Ofsted Learning and Skills Inspection Report  
**Noted:** that the Principal reported good progress on the work required by Ofsted in the report.  
**Noted:** that the Principal offered thanks to all those involved in validation and revalidation work, in particular the Quality Officer.  
**Noted:** that the Chair proposed a vote of thanks to all those involved with inspection.
- 14** **Received:** a report from the Principal  
**Noted:** the following points:
- The Principal wished to thank all those who sent messages of support after her recent surgery.
  - Bursaries for CertHE students (Level 4) would only be retained for one more year. The College would use the time to develop other FE work to earn the SFA funding allocation. In addition fewer Social Work bursaries would be available and only at Levels 5 and 6.
  - It was disappointing that Ruskin Fields were not included in either the Barton Area Action Plan or the Sites and Housing Allocation for Oxford City. The College was looking to turn over one of the fields to productive use. The RSU were considering making a bid for money from the NUS Green Scheme.
  - The College was working with several partners on outreach work, and hoped that members of the Governing Executive would continue to help with this.
  - The recent Ruskin Arts Festival had been a truly inclusive day, and had introduced “The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists” to a new generation.
  - The recent staff survey had shown that staff were more willing to become involved in committees and decision making, provided that they felt involved and well informed as to how committee structures worked.
- Noted:** that the new Foundation Degree in Business and Social Enterprise, in partnership with Brookes University, was already recruiting and that the College had just heard informally that it had achieved all the conditions set by the validation committee.  
**Noted:** that there had been a very productive staff meeting following the staff survey.
- 15** **Received:** a verbal update on the work of the Ruskin Students’ Union  
**Noted:** the following points:
- The new officers were working hard to renew the Union.
  - There had been a good turnout for the recent by-elections.
  - The RSU had sent representatives to the NUS conference.
  - The RSU was considering applying for a £300k grant for a sustainable project
  - That the RSU was working on the hardship fund, and had agreed to make this year’s Red Ball an “Austerity Ball”
  - That the RSU was now looking forward and also looking to work with the NUS.
- Noted:** that the Governing Executive welcomed the enthusiasm of the RSU members and complimented the RSU on becoming more inclusive and drawing in more part-time students.

*Peter Dwyer left the meeting at 12.55pm*

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- 16**    **Noted:** the date of the next meeting
- **5<sup>th</sup> July at 9.30am**

*There being no further business Part A of the meeting closed at 1.00pm*

Signed by the Chair of the meeting succeeding that to which these minutes pertain

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