

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2024 from 4.00pm to 7.00pm.

Present

Andrew Summers (Chair)
Shoku Amirani (Independent)
Richard Bee (Independent)
Andy Cook (Vice-Chancellor)
Esther Gbogboade (President of Students' Union) (until item 7 only)
Professor Lizbeth Goodman (Co-opted)
Kate Gregory (Independent)
Dr Penny Haughan (Co-opted)
Paul O'Grady (Independent)
Professor Lisa Stansbie (Co-opted)
Alberto Villanueva (Academic Staff Member)
Lee Wilkinson (Independent)
Stephen Woodford (Independent)
Paul Wright (Independent)

In attendance

Christopher Costigan – University Secretary and Director of Strategic Delivery
Tony Croudass – Chief Information Officer
Karen Ingram – Director of People and Culture
Lawrence Lartey – Director of Innovation, Industry and Enterprise
Adrien Laure – Director of Finance
Professor Simon Robertshaw – Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Emma Shailer – Chief Operating Officer
James Taylor – Governance Manager

Apologies

Stuart Duncan (Independent)
Dr Markos Koumaditis (Independent)
Chiz Nwaosu (Professional Services Staff Member)

REDACTED

	CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
24/86	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Stuart Duncan, Dr Markos Koumaditis and Chiz Nwaosu. A particular welcome was extended to Paul Wright, a new Governor.
	DEEP DIVE
24/87	The Board noted the demonstration of facilities available in the university's newly launched Centre of Excellence in Emerging Technology (CEET).
24/88	The Board reflected on the demonstration, drawing out the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities would be showcased to students who were currently enrolling at the university during their welcome week. To help with this, a recent staff development day had been used to introduce the technology to academic staff. • The impressive technology in the Centre should be "front and centre" in terms of marketing the university to potential future students.
24/89	The Chair expressed his thanks to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and colleagues for arranging the deep dive.
	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
24/90	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.
24/91	The Chair advised that the Governance Manager would shortly be writing to Governors, asking them to review and update the Register of Interests document available on the University website, as part of the annual audit process.
	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
24/92	The minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on 31 July 2024 were approved, subject to the amendment that the Board had approved the reappointment of Richard Bee and Lizbeth Goodman for further three-year terms, rather than two-year terms. It was noted that the University Secretary would add redactions prior to publication. Action: University Secretary to add redactions to the minutes prior to publication on the University's website.
24/93	It was noted that action 24/74, regarding the reporting of staff satisfaction levels in the Risk Register, had been completed. On action 24/69, regarding the Vice Chancellor engaging with the Students' Union so that a proposal on future working could be prepared, the Vice-Chancellor reported that external advice was being sought regarding the Student Union's proposal to create a Transformation Advisory Board.
	CHAIR'S UPDATE
24/94	The Chair updated the Board on recent policy developments, including the recently elected UK government which had signalled a change in attitude regarding higher education. It was noted that the role of the Office for Students (OfS) had been redefined so that its focus was on financial stability and achieving good outcomes for students. The Vice-Chancellor reported that there had been a recent conversation with the OfS, from which little new intelligence had been gleaned. The OfS had followed up with a request for further information. The Chair noted that there had been talk of a future rise in student fees, but this had been largely hearsay and media speculation.

24/95	The Chair informed the Board that a process had begun for the recruitment of a Chair-Elect to succeed him as Board Chair in 2025. Richard Bee had agreed to chair the recruitment panel.
24/96	The Chair informed the Board of the recent resignation of the University Secretary and Director of Strategic Delivery, who would leave the university at the end of the year. A recruitment process had begun for his successor, with an amendment to the role as a University Secretary and Registrar.
VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT	
24/97	The Vice Chancellor introduced his report. He reported that, in relation to the University's financial performance, the year-end had closed with an operating surplus of REDACTED. This meant reserves would increase REDACTED. Students for the year ahead were now enrolling, REDACTED. New measures around admissions processes had presented barriers to the market, but that had now been resolved. In addition, a decision to have a November intake had been taken and it was hoped that the ground could be made up in due course. Volatility in the market had been expected, which was the reason for REDACTED contingency being factored into the annual budget.
24/98	The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Board of the three pillars of strategy development – (i) growth in student numbers; (ii) enhanced student experience and (iii) improved brand recognition. The proposed strategy REDACTED had been agreed by the Board at its July meeting and so planning for delivery was now taking place; the Academic Strategy and Innovation, Industry and Enterprise Strategy to be discussed at this meeting would both feed into the ambition of enhancing student experience; for improved brand recognition, a meeting of 30 university staff the previous day had focused on vision/brand considerations. The corporate strategy was on track to be presented to the Board at its November meeting – it would be a public-facing document and so without great detail, but underpinned by a programme plan, financial plan and various business cases. Once the corporate strategy was agreed, a mobilisation phase would be needed that would last into Summer 2025.
STUDENT EXPERIENCE / ACADEMIC ASSURANCE	
24/99	<p>The Dean gave a presentation to provide an update on measures to improve Ravensbourne's student experience and provide academic assurance. He highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSS overall positivity showed an improvement of 10.6% over the last two years, but the figure remained 5.4% below the sector as a whole. Looking at the numbers by department, it was clear that Fashion and also Media and Film had underperformed. • There were individual reasons why certain courses had performed or not performed. The intention was to invest further on those underperforming courses. It was important, however, to examine the detail received at a granular level. • The PTES performance figures showed overall satisfaction of 92%, favourable to London, the sector more generally and for small and specialist institutions. It was notable that high figures of students had responded to the survey. • In terms of the action vehicles, the new Student Voice Framework might be shared with the Board of Governors. A new Student Experience Committee would be formed, along with a Course Enhancement Process for those courses that were in special measures, which could decide future measures such as further investment, through to closing courses as appropriate. • The majority of the PTES survey respondents were international students, which was positive, but it did demonstrate that more work was needed in terms of integration. Current spaces did not encourage collaboration, which was addressed in the Academic Strategy the Board would consider later in the meeting. • The Graduate outcome survey asked at what level graduates were working - whether they were employed or engaged in further study. The 2021/22 figures were down on

<p>24/100</p> <p>24/101</p> <p>24/102</p>	<p>the previous year, but there was little that could be done to change the metrics, which were calibrated in a way that many in the sector found unhelpful, in particular due to the time lag in reporting. It was hoped however that a changed framework would improve matters by diversifying our offer.</p> <p>In discussion, the following points were drawn out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEET technology demonstrated in the Deep Dive could help to encourage collaboration, help to market the University to potential new students but also improve the experience for current students. • The courses that seemed to struggle most were smaller, such as Digital TV Production. • Measures to help students into employment were embedded throughout the curriculum. Students were introduced in their first year to employment opportunities in the sector; there was also a professional life and practice module in every course. There was also a Careers team, who worked on projects such as the Careers Lab which had been the subject of the Governors’ July Deep Dive. A jobs board was included in the newsletter sent to students twice monthly. <p>The University Secretary introduced the revised Student Protection Plan, which was a requirement for every university. It was good practice to review it regularly. The section on collaborative provision had been expanded to reflect new risks that had been identified through the increased provision. The sections where the Covid pandemic had been mentioned had been amended to include reference to future similar situations, but also to highlight other new risks. The Plan had already been reviewed by the Academic Board and so approval was sought today from the Board of Governors.</p> <p>The Board of Governors approved the Student Protection Plan.</p>
INNOVATION, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY	
<p>24/103</p> <p>24/104</p>	<p>The Director of Innovation, Industry and Enterprise gave a presentation on the Innovation, Industry and Enterprise (IIE) Strategy for 2024-2029. In particular it was highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Directorate of Innovation, Industry and Enterprise had been founded in 2022 with the immediate objective of aligning Ravensbourne’s partnerships, the Creative Lab and Research (applied) and Knowledge Exchange. From a starting point of one staff member, it had now grown into a substantive team. • The directorate’s five objectives were now: (i) developing employable students; (ii) developing student experience/alumni partnerships; (iii) building staff capability in knowledge exchange and quality research; (iv) developing the entrepreneurial spirit and capabilities of all students; and (v) working with the creative and tech sector to identify skills gaps and develop appropriate products/CPD to meet the sector’s needs. • In terms of developing employable students, one example was a collaboration with an illustrator to create an NHS report and short film detailing the key achievements of the London Workforce Race Strategy. • In terms of creating new business opportunities, 50 alumni had applied to join the Start Up Lab, with only 25 places available this year. Staff had developed, authored and delivered CPD courses for Amazon staff on subjects such as knowledge exchange, research and thinking commercially. • The ways in which we message – through the work of visiting professors, cutting edge knowledge exchange, providing student with opportunities through the Creative Lab, Rave Lates and also in quality partnerships with Microsoft, On, Nike, Deloitte and Uncommon – was welcome and important, but more was needed. • The responses from those in industry demonstrated a real desire to work with Ravensbourne on future projects. <p>In discussion, the following points were drawn out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work with Uncommon had been a pilot which, whilst presenting IP challenges, had nonetheless been a great opportunity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this area Ravensbourne operated as a commercial entity, with external organisations being billed for the university's insight. • The Communications team needed to ensure that this work received the greatest visibility, in order to attract future students. It was not being done by other universities at this level and thus should be front and centre in our marketing. • The ongoing requirement for universities to produce an Access and Participation Plan had highlighted the issue of Higher Education building social capital for the student body – work such as this helped to achieve that. That said, there was a balance to be struck - finding out what industry wanted as well as students. • Governors would be invited to future events arranged by the IIE Directorate. • It was important that this strategy had a strong industry focus reflecting what were industry needs not just student needs, especially in the areas of knowledge exchange.
	ACADEMIC STRATEGY
24/105	<p>The Dean gave a presentation on the Academic Strategy. In particular it was highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry has told us what it wants in students is curiosity, character, flexibility, willingness to learn, creative thinking, breadth of disciplinary understanding, drive and ambition for a new world. • Students have told us that they want collaborate spaces and crossover opportunities, that the university should be industry-ready, that local and global issues mattered, that they had a personalised experience in which health and wellbeing were crucial. • The six objectives of the strategy were: (i) a culture of learning excellence; (ii) valued student partnerships; (iii) learning with industry and to be leaders in creative learning; (iv) celebration and promotion of diversity; (v) portfolio growth and cultivation of innovation; and (vi) co-creation of transformative educational experiences for students. • Delivery of the strategy would be through a substantial implementation plan, beneath which there would be a series of projects to ensure successful delivery. • Use of a balanced scorecard, broken down into recruitment, academic performance and student satisfaction, would ensure that projects were monitored and managed effectively.
24/106	<p>In discussion, the following points were drawn out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One project group would look at new growth, including the possibility of new course areas, dependent upon the upcoming institution-wide strategy, once approved. • Artificial Intelligence (AI) was to be seen as an opportunity rather than a disruption and the industry members of the Board gave useful input on how their industries were handling AI. There was an ongoing debate about whether the university should be offering courses on AI design, or using AI in current courses. The discussion continued, with some confusion about how AI might be used, but it was interesting particularly in terms of support that could be offered to students. From an institutional perspective, the use of AI needed to be considered for back office functions and providing support services. It was acknowledged that, particularly in the education sector, AI now permeated everything, with integration constantly accelerating. It should be utilised in a spirit of positivity, as a great enabler of creative industries. • Consideration should be given to the creation of industry advisory groups, with participation from Ravensbourne alumni, which would be a great attraction.
	RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
24/107	<p>The University Secretary introduced the draft Risk Management Strategy. He reported that the Risk Management internal audit conducted earlier in the year had recommended that such a Strategy be adopted. The draft Strategy had been considered by the Audit Committee at its recent meeting. The Audit Committee Chair confirmed that one amendment requested by the Committee was that the regularity with which the Executive Team considered risk be included in the Strategy, which had now been incorporated. The Strategy was recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.</p>

24/108	The Board approved the Risk Management Strategy.
	SUMMARY OF COMMITTEES
24/109	The Board noted the summary of committees. The Chair noted that the Audit Committee meeting had been the first for Governor Penny Haughan as Chair of the Committee. The Committee Chair reported that particular consideration had been given at the meeting to the Procurement internal audit that had recently been conducted.
	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
24/110	There was no other business.
	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
24/111	The date of the next formal Board meeting was 27 November 2024 4.00pm-7.00pm at Ravensbourne University London.