

(M 09/223 – M 09/254)

Royal Holloway
University of London

COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council
held on 16 October 2009**

Present:	Sir Andrew Burns Mr A Alway Mr D M Beever (<i>from item 6</i>) P Blagbrough Professor C Bradley Mr J Brannan Mr R Buswell Professor F Driver Mr M Hamilton-Griffin 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 Dr A Stead Mrs G Stuart Mrs J Walker
Apologies:	Mrs S Tyacke	
With:	Ms K Kerr Mr J Ackroyd	College Secretary & Head of Governance Governance Officer
In attendance:	Professor A Tickell Professor G Ward Professor P Beesley Professor R Deem Professor K Normington Mr S Bland Mr G Robinson Ms S Kay	Vice-Principal (Research, Enterprise & Communications) Vice-Principal (Planning & Resources) Dean of the Faculty of Science Dean of the Faculty of History & Social Sciences Dean of the Faculty of Arts Director of Facilities Management Director of Finance Head of Strategic Development
Observers:	Mr J Frank Mrs M Reilly	Observer (on behalf of UCU) PA to College Secretary

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1. The Council noted that Councillor Stephen Cooksey, Councillor for Dorking and the Holmwoods and Mole Valley Councillor for Dorking South had been appointed as the Surrey County Council representative. 09/223
- 1.2. The Council noted that extensions had been agreed by the Nominations and Honorary Awards Committee until 31 December 2009 for the appointments of Dr A Stead and Mr J Brannan. It was reported that staff elections were to take place during the Autumn term. 09/224
- 1.3. The Council noted that extensions had been agreed by the Nominations and Honorary Awards Committee until 30 September 2010 for the appointments of Mr A Martin and Mr A Alway. This was reported as being in accordance with the agreement for these to continue as rolling appointments until the negotiations for the introduction of new definitions of staff are finalised (M07/154). 09/225

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. 09/226

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 September 2009 (M09/196 to M09/222) were confirmed and signed subject to the following amendments: 09/227

- 09/204 – Amend the final sentence of the first paragraph to read “The Chairman of the Audit & Compliance Committee considered the following to be a fundamental barrier to that Committee signing off on the adequacy of the merger due diligence” and delete the first sentence of the second paragraph.
- 09/208 – Remove “It was understood that apathy from certain members of the academic staff who did not envisage any personal impact on their area of specialism from merging with SGUL, may have led to such members abstaining.”
- 09/213 – Amend “2 September” to “23 September”.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 4.1. Finance Committee 09/228

It was reported that a statement with general applicability on the authority of Committee Chairpersons to use their delegated powers outside Committee meetings was to be considered by the Finance

Committee prior to approval by the Council for inclusion in that Committee's Terms of Reference. Following discussion on the correct passage for such an amendment to Committee's Terms of Reference, the Chairman directed that a paper should be submitted to the January meeting of the Council which detailed the powers to be delegated for use in exceptional circumstances and those which were delegated for more general situations.

- 4.2. Proposed Revenue & Capital Budget 2009/2010 09/229

Arising from M09/138, confirmation was requested from the Director of Finance that copies of Deloitte's publication on sustainable governance had been circulated to members of the Finance Committee and Principal's Briefing Group. This assurance was not received during the meeting.

- 4.3. Campus Masterplan 09/230

Arising from M09/145, an oral update was given by the Director of Facilities Management on progress made in the College's Estate Masterplan. It was reported that the Masterplan had been submitted to Runnymede Borough Council for framework consultation at the end of July 2009. A visit to the campus on 19th September by Councillors to view the Masterplan was reported as being successful, with a favourable initial response gained for the proposals. A discussion of the plans by the Estates Consultation Group was to be the next step towards securing the requisite development permissions. It was reported that the College currently had no further residential planning permissions, save for the areas of the estate which were north of the A30. Should approval to move the exiting greenbelt around the College not be obtained, existing planning approvals for Academic buildings could be swapped for residential permissions.

- 4.4. Committees Effectiveness Review 09/231

An update on the progress made in monitoring the effectiveness of College Committees, arising from M09/192 was not provided during the meeting.

5. UNSTARRING OF ITEMS

- The following item was unstarred for discussion during the meeting: 09/232

Paper 16 (CL/09/94) – Minutes of the Human Resources and Equal Opportunities Committee meeting, held on 23 June 2009.

PART A: MAJOR ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6. ACTING PRINCIPALS REPORT

The Council received the Acting Principal's report (CL/09/86) which focussed predominantly on the aftermath of merger negotiations with St. Georges and the Planning for Change project. The Acting Principal noted St Georges' decision not to proceed with the merger and reported that intranet messages conveying this decision were published on 25th September 2009. 09/233

It was reported that the Planning for Change project had taken on a renewed importance in the light of further anticipated deterioration in the economic climate, which included the need to model a 7-14% possible cut in funding over the next 2 years. Whilst the College was in a good financial situation for 2009/10, primarily due to recruitment of higher than anticipated numbers of international students, it was projected that the College's income was to plateau and costs were to rise from 2010/11 onwards. The Planning for Change project was to replace the usual planning round for 2010/11 and its recommendations and conclusions were to be reported to the February meeting of the Finance Committee. It was reported that before any further anticipated external funding cuts, £5m of savings were required over the next couple of years in order to maintain an adequate financial base for the College. 09/234

7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

7.1. The Council noted a provisional financial outturn for 2009-10 (CL/09/87) which identified a £4.3m estimated surplus for the year. The surplus, which was a £1.6m improvement on budget, was to place the College in a good position to address pressing capital requirements in the estate. 09/235

The Director of Finance provided an oral commentary on aspects of the provisional outturn, which highlighted the reasons for a higher than budgeted surplus. These reasons included improvements in contributions from special courses and consultancy, a strong outturn from the Founder's Endowment fund, a decrease in bad debts written off against tuition fee income and a strong performance in the Residence and Catering Account, in part due to the effect of low interest rates on borrowing. 09/236

Concern was raised about the accuracy of mid-year management forecasting in consideration of the wide variance between the budgeted and provisional outturn. The Director of Finance assured Council that a more formal procedure to increase the predictability in the outcome of the forecast had been implemented and that the Investment Committee had been investigating how investment fund managers could provide a better indication throughout the year of how the fund performs, which would improve future forecasts. 09/237

- 7.2. The Head of Strategic Planning provided a report (CL/09/88) on the estimated student numbers for 2009/10, which had in total exceeded targets. As at 1st October 2009, 3706 FTE students were reported as being on campus against a target of 3400. A large proportion of the students recruited over target were in the School of Management which had recruited 2 additional administrators and extra teaching fellows, in addition to having secured additional teaching space in order to cope with the additional students. 09/238

8. STRATEGIC PLANNING

8.1. Corporate Plan Progress Pack

The Council received a further copy of the Executive Summary of the Corporate Plan Progress Pack (CL/09/89) which had previously been supplied to members during the June meeting. It was noted that the paper was now outdated and was to be revised during the course of the Planning for Change project. 09/239

Several items within the plan were brought to the attention of members, including a broader range of countries in overseas recruitment (T4.2), the unlikelihood of achieving projected Research Grant application successes due to the current economic climate (T1.3) and the College's reliance on HEFCE funding which highlighted the need to diversify income streams, in order to weather further funding cuts (T3.3). 09/240

9. DEVELOPMENT

The Vice-Principal (Research, Enterprise and Communications) provided a paper containing plans for the College's Development activities (CL/09/90). Following staff changes within the Development department, the department's strategic objectives and operational approach had been reviewed and several changes implemented. These were reported as including the recruitment of new development consultants to advise the department, improvements to the quality of "Higher" magazine, an overhaul of the "Annual Giving" campaign and back office changes producing better efficiencies in the department. 09/241

It was noted that the full Development strategy would be provided to Council during a future meeting for consideration, once a report on activities had been received from the College's new consultants. The Vice-Principal also agreed to arrange meetings between several members of Council and the consultants. 09/242

10. RESEARCH

The Council received a paper on the Research Strategy, research grant success rates and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) consultation (CL/09/91). 09/243

It was reported that over the last 6 months the College had been engaged in consultations with Academics and Researchers across the College in order to inform the creation of a Research Strategy. The strategy was to be considered by the three Faculty Boards and the Academic Board for approval prior to being made available to Council for information during Spring 2010. 09/244

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) census, which was to replace the Research Assessment Exercise was reported as introducing several significant changes to the way the exercise was to be carried out in 2012. These changes included the introduction of 25% of the final grade being awarded for the degree by which “impact” can be demonstrated, a reduction in the number of units of assessment & main panels and a reduction in the role of the “research environment” in the exercise. It was noted that the REF was a contentious issue and that the 94 Group had been in a close dialogue with the Shadow Universities and Skills Secretary over the proposed changes. 09/245

The Council noted a further cut announced by the umbrella body for the Research Councils, of 1.2% across all grants from April 2010, which would be incorporated into revised budgetary projections. 09/246

11. GOVERNANCE

Appointment of the Principal 09/247

The Council received the terms of reference for the appointment of a new Principal (CL/09/92) for consideration. The main proposal put forward in the document was for a Selection Committee to be formed comprising members of Council, the Faculty Deans and a representative of each of the Academic Board and of the Administrative Staff. The Council

AGREED to establish a Selection Committee with the membership and Terms of Reference as set out in CL/09/92.

12. DELEGATION OF APPROVAL TO COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

The Council 09/248

AGREED: To delegate to the Executive Committee the power to approve the Annual Accounts for 2008/9 for submission to HEFCE by 30 November 2009.

It was noted that the accounts were to be considered by the Finance and Audit & Compliance Committees prior to the Executive Committee. All members of the Council were invited to attend the Finance Committee Meeting on 28 October 2009.

PART B: ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL

13. REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Council noted that no action had been taken by the Chairman since the last meeting. 09/250

14. REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CIRCULATION

The Council noted that no action had been taken by circulation since the last meeting. 09/251

15. AUDIT & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Compliance Committee held on 6 July 2009. 09/252

16. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources & Equal Opportunities Committee held on 23 June 2009 and noted that the minutes would need to be amended in respect of the possible explanation as to the low percentage of female professors being employed by the College. 09/253

17. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council noted that the following documents had been sealed since the last meeting: 09/254

James Ackroyd
Governance Officer
22 December 2009