

Record of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Governing Body of Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance held on Thursday 23 March 2023 at the College

Present:

Jennifer Sims (Chair)
Professor Mary Oliver (Acting Principal) for Items 18 to 32
Chris Chappell
Anni Domingo
Vivien Goodwin
Sarah Howard
Caroline Jenkins (Staff Governor)
Dr Brian Lobel (Staff Governor)
Hassan Mahamdallie
Janet Smith
Brownyn Teasdale (Student Governor)
Jess Verri (SU President and Student Governor)
Mike Whittaker from Item 25

In attendance:

Joseph Lowe – Director of Finance and Operations for Items 18 to 32
Angela Taylor – Academic Registrar for Items 18 to 32
Jim Benson – Secretary
Aurora Lewis-Green
(Head of Student Recruitment & Marketing) for the pre-meeting presentation
Professor Stephen Farrier
(Director of Research and Head of Postgraduate School) for Items 27 and 28

The meeting commenced with a presentation from Aurora Lewis-Green (Head of Student Recruitment & Marketing) on the College's student recruitment, marketing and PR strategy and operations.

2023/18 Welcome

18.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

18.2 Thanks were given to Rogan Dixon who reluctantly had to stand down from the Board. The Chair gave a full explanation for the reasons he resigned and agreed to write formally to thank him. The Board thanked Mr Dixon for his dedicated service to the College and it was hoped he would be welcomed back to visit in the near future.

18.3 Sylvia Darkwa Ohemeng's resignation from the Board was noted.

18.4 It was confirmed that George Littlejohn (Vice-Chair) would replace Rogan as Chair of the F&GP Committee with immediate effect.

18.5 The Chair reminded all members and attendees of the need to keep all matters and papers relating to the meeting confidential to the Board.

2023/19 Apologies

These were received from Sud Basu, George Littlejohn (Vice-Chair) and Professor Steven Spier.

2023/20 Conflict of Interest Declarations

The Secretary had a standing declaration due to his appointment at the University of East London.

2023/21 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2023

21.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

21.2 The Secretary was asked to record the items that Board Members and attendees were present for.

2023/22 Matters arising from the minutes

22.1 It had not been possible to finalise details of the governance review as the Governance Committee meeting had not taken place. It was noted that if the Committee could convene before 4 May 2023 it would be possible to submit proposals to the Board in May 2023.

22.2 It was confirmed that all Board members had been provided with previous papers submitted to the Board on the Single Academic Framework straight after the last meeting.

22.3 The Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that updates on fundraising and student recruitment activities had been reported to F&GP Committee and will come to the Board via the Task and Finish Group Report.

22.4 The Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that the revised management accounts had been presented to F&GP Committee and the Board and apologized for the late submission to the meeting today. He added that this was due to having to finalise work for the Task and Finish Groups. The Chair said that the very late submission of papers was a matter of concern and that this would be discussed further outside the meeting.

22.5 The Secretary confirmed that the Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee had been published.

22.6 The Secretary confirmed that the Annual Report from the Audit Committee had been approved by the Chair of Audit Committee.

22.7 The Secretary confirmed that no concerns had been expressed with the proposed Board and Committee dates for 2023/24 so these could be taken as approved.

22.8 The Chair stated that matters relating to when the Search Committee and Selection Committee would meet would be dealt with under the item on the appointment of the next Principal.

2023/23 Acting Principal's Report and Academic Report

23.1 The Acting Principal spoke to the paper and invited questions on her report. The following matters were reported to the Board:

- i. That final year student productions were underway on the main campus and at Greenwich Theatre, the Omnibus Theatre and the Trencherfield Mill Studio Theatre in Wigan.
- ii. Punch Drunk Enrichment had now brought their double decker bus onto campus for refurbishment and it was noted that the College would be providing them with workshop facilities and rehearsal spaces. After the refurbishment had been completed, Punch Drunk Enrichment would then launch the Elimis Bus project from the College which would travel to schools across the South East with the aim of providing an immersive new performance experience. Students from the College would be involved in both observing and gaining work experience from the project.
- iii. Gary Oldman was not now available in 2023 due to increased work commitments, but expressed his ongoing support for the College and continued desire to fund a scholarship. He had agreed to provide a statement to use in the fundraising campaign and was aiming to provide active support in 2024.

23.2 In response to a question, the Acting Principal stated that she had met with the UCU Representatives with the aim of minimising the impact of their ongoing industrial action whilst acknowledging the concerns that they raised. She added that the UCU Representatives seemed to appreciate the College's predicament and the fact that, like many small institutions, it was difficult to adopt the UCEA line. The Student Representatives stated that concerns were being expressed by students as to whether support would be available from tutors and whether marking would take place, but some of this was dependent on the course in question. It was noted that on some occasions students had experienced difficulty in contacting tutors. The Student Representatives confirmed that students generally understood the reasons for the dispute and were supportive of the action. They acknowledged that tutors had made efforts to mitigate the impact of the industrial action. The Academic Registrar informed the Board that she had met with the Student Representatives to assure them that remedial action would be put in place and was confident that all

work would be marked as normal. She added that no formal complaints about course delivery during the period of industrial action had been received. The Academic Staff Representative added that academic staff were conscious of the need to maintain a good student experience despite the importance of the issues which related to the industrial action.

23.3 In response to a question about the termination of the catering contract, the Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that it was likely the staff employed by Sodexo would transfer to the College in April 2023 but this was subject to contract negotiations.

2023/24 Student Report

24.1 Jess Verri provided a summary of the Student's Union events that had taken place and those that were planned for the rest of 2022/23. This included:

- i. Valentine's Day events which included an Acts of Kindness event;
- ii. events organised by the DICE Officer promoting the use of safe spaces for group meetings;
- iii. coordinating activities with the Symposium Team to support their event;
- iv. three social evening events and the forthcoming Summer Ball;
- v. a forthcoming Pride Event.

24.2 Jess Verri advised that opportunities were being explored for opening up Student Union funding for student societies. It was noted that this would encourage students to take a more active role in the Students' Union and enhanced the possibility of the involvement of Bruford students on courses delivered outside the main campus. Discussions had taken place between the Director of Finance and Operations, the Head of Estates and Tom Burt over new student spaces and accommodation for the Students' Union. The Student Representatives confirmed that the proposed sabbatical officer appointment had been well received and should allow for more active representation.

24.3 It was noted at the last meeting of the Board it had been reported that the student representatives had raised concerns at the Equity and Diversity Committee around a number of EDI issues, many focused on peer to peer behavioural concerns. The Academic Registrar confirmed that she had met with Jess Verri and Bronwyn Teasdale to consider both specific and general issues. She added that the allocation of further safe spaces was under consideration and that a collaborative Working Group had been established.

24.4 The Board thanked the students for their report and encouraged them to keep the Board informed on the matters raised.

2023/25 Finance Report

Management Accounts

25.1-3 The Management accounts were noted by the Board.

Approval of the Financial Regulations

25.4 The Director of Finance and Operations spoke to the paper stating that the Financial Regulations had last been approved in 2018 and confirmed that the Chair of Audit Committee had recommended the approval of the revised version to the Board. In response to a question the Director of Finance and Operations agreed to clarify that Regulation 20.5.1 meant that any individual donations over £30,000 received or given must be approved by the Audit Committee, following a recommendation from the SLT.

2023/26 Key points from minutes of committees

Finance and General Purposes Committee-13 February 2023

26.1 The Board noted the report.

Audit Committee-27 February 2023

26.2 It was confirmed that the Risk Register would be presented to the Board after the Internal Audit review of risk had been conducted. It was hoped that this would be before the next meeting of the Board.

Governance Committee-23 March 2023

26.3 It was noted that there was no report as the Committee had not met but it was planned to hold a meeting before 4 May 2023.

Strategic Discussion

2023/27 SLT Report on the Task and Finish Groups

27.1 The Acting Principal provided a presentation on the work of the Task and Finish Groups. It was noted that there were six such groups covering the following matters:

- Financial Key Performance Indicators
- Financial Modelling
- Fundraising and Other Income

- Student Recruitment
- Expenditure
- Partnerships

27.2 The following points were raised in the course of the discussions about the work of the Task and Finish Groups:

- i. The Chair of the group considering Financial Key Performance Indicators confirmed that the proposed financial health score was intended to be a RAG-rated monitoring tool to highlight the areas of the College's finances that should be focused on.
- ii. The scenarios outlined in the Financial Modelling were intended to highlight the impact of certain eventualities.
- iii. Future staff pay increases could only seemingly be met through increased student recruitment as fees had limited scope to increase income. The Acting Principal stated that this reflected the level of risk that the Group reviewing this considered the College could tolerate.
- iv. in relation to fundraising, the Acting Principal stated that it was essential for a Development Officer to be appointed supported by a Development Office if this initiative was to be successful. She advised that this was expected to be in place by August 2023. In relation to the targets that were identified, it was noted that the Development Officer would review all options identified by the Group. The Acting Principal confirmed that naming buildings as well as sponsoring bricks and seats remained viable options.
- v. With regards to Student Recruitment, the development of a CRM system was seen as a priority and the Head of Student Recruitment & Marketing had identified a way of funding this from within the existing College budget.
- vi. In respect of partnerships, any proposal would have to ensure that the College's identity was maintained. This extended to civic relationships and collaborations with other higher education institutions.
- vii. The Acting Principal stated there was a role for the Board in advocating on behalf of the College.

27.3 It was proposed that the College should cease entry to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for any newly appointed non-academic members of staff and replace it with a College-run defined benefit scheme. The Board agreed to accept this proposal and asked that SLT commence negotiations with the unions.

2023/28 Interim Research and Knowledge Exchange Report for Governors

28.1 Professor Stephen Farrier provided a report to the Board on the College's current position in respect of research and knowledge exchange. He advised that the political context would need to take account of the recent Paul Nurse Review on research, development and innovation, the Government's proposals on lifelong learning and the Parliamentary review of the OfS. He asked the Board to note the following points:

- i. That the Nurse Review, if implemented, would empower researchers and could provide greater transparency over the use of Quality Research (QR) funding allocated after the Research Excellence Framework (REF) had taken place. It was noted that this may not necessarily benefit institutions such as the College.
- ii. There was a drive to reduce the bureaucratic burden in relation to the REF and proposals were currently under consideration by the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology.
- iii. That the College should take the opportunity to review the relative merits of research initiatives at peer institutions.
- iv. That research ethics and integrity would be an increasingly important factor in gaining support for research following a spate of incidents of data falsification.
- v. The College should monitor closely the GuildHE response to the proposals on knowledge exchange noting that there were no new funds in this area in 2023/24 but this was likely to be increased in future years.
- vi. The ongoing projects from the previous year which included:
 - Establishment of Early Career Researcher group;
 - Hansjorg Schmitt, Library of Light project;
 - Completion of Kathakali Archive digitisation project;
 - Follow up to Canon project - developing materials on the history of theatre.
- vii. The plans and actions outlined in the paper that included:
 - To position the College's Research and Knowledge Exchange activity to be more outward looking;
 - to develop sustainable capacity;
 - to continue to develop strong narratives;
 - to develop enhanced capacity for PhD research.

28.2 It was reported that the College had signed the UUK Concordat to support Research Integrity. The Board requested that details of when this was signed be provided to the next meeting and confirmation of when the annual report on research integrity would be submitted.

28.3 The Board agreed that, in addition to the annual report, it would welcome further reports on developments in research activity. The Acting Principal pointed out that her report did cover aspects of research and knowledge exchange and would continue to expand upon this in future.

28.4 While it was agreed that the College's research should be given a higher profile, it was noted that some work was already in the public eye. The example was given of Nick Hunt's research on the history of technical theatre which is used in some schools and colleges and is widely cited.

2023/29 Report on Access & Participation

The Academic Registrar spoke to the paper stating that the College performed well in all bar one area and its performance in respect of Global Majority students had improved with the impact from ALRA students. It was noted that the OfS was likely to cease using the 'POLAR4 Q1' measure in future which should benefit the College. This was noted by the Board.

Formal Business

2023/30 Office for Students Consultations including the Consultation on the Proposed Condition of Registration on Sexual Misconduct and Harassment

30.1 The Secretary spoke to the paper and advised on the OfS consultation on the proposed Condition of Registration on Sexual Misconduct and Harassment. It was agreed that SLT should monitor the GuildHE response and contribute as appropriate.

30.2 The OfS consultation on payment of fees for investigations was also noted.

2023/31 Office for Students Communications

The report was noted by the Committee.

2023/32 Board and Committee Calendar 2023/24

The Board confirmed the proposed dates for Board and Committee meetings in 2023/24.

Dates of meetings in 2022/23

The Chair asked the Board to note the dates of meetings in 2022/23:

Thursday 4 May 2023;
Thursday 6 July 2023

The Chair asked the Board to note the dates of meetings in 2023/24:

Thursday 21 September 2023
Thursday 23 November 2023
Thursday 25 January 2024
Thursday 21 March 2024
Thursday 9 May 2024
Thursday 4 July 2024

| Action | Meeting Date | Officer(s) responsible | Due Date |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 22.1 Finalise details of the governance review at Governance Committee in March 2023 and submit to the Board in May 2023 | 26 January 2023 | Secretary | March/ May 2023 |
| 22.9 Action would be taken to ensure that Management Accounts were sent to the Board in a timely fashion | 26 January 2023/23 March 2023 | Chair/ Acting Principal | ASAP |
| 25.2 Provide a summary sheet with the Management Accounts that detailed the major deviations from the budget | 23 March 2023 | Director of Finance and Operations | Going forward |

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|--|---------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 25.4 Clarify that Financial Regulation 20.5.1 meant that any individual donations received or given over £30,000 must be approved by the Audit Committee, following a recommendation from the SLT. | 23 March 2023 | Director of Finance and Operations | ASAP |
| 27.3 Commence negotiations with the unions over withdrawing from the LLGPS | 23 March 2023 | SLT | ASAP |
| 28.2 Provide details of when the College signed the UUK Concordat to support Research Integrity and confirm when the annual report on research integrity would be submitted to the Board. | 23 March 2023 | Acting Principal/Acad emic Registrar | Next Board Meeting |
| 30.1 SLT to monitor the GuildHE response to the consultation on the proposed Condition of Registration on Sexual Misconduct and Harassment and contribute as appropriate. | 23 March 2023 | SLT | 4 May 2023 |
| Arrangements for the selection process for Principal to be finalised | 23 March 2023 | Chair Chair of Remuneration Committee | End of April |