

**UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON  
STUDENT SENATE**

**Summary Report: 1 May 2019**

The 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the University Student Senate was held on Wednesday 1 May 2019. It was the first meeting of Student Senate chaired by Professor Jean-Noël Ezingear, who had started in his position as Vice-Chancellor of the University on the same day. Professor Ezingear noted that this meeting of Student Senate would be his first formal meeting at the University as Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed all present and introduced himself. Student Senate noted the reasons the Vice-Chancellor gave for wanting to join the University of Roehampton, including its excellent reputation and culture, and its focus on social mobility, the student experience and having a positive impact on society.

**Top of your agenda**

All those present were asked to introduce themselves and discuss their priorities. Among the matters raised by student members at this meeting were the following (ordering as presented round the table):

- Securing funding for mental health first aid
- Improving support for care leavers
- Maintaining and improving the experience for international students and students in the Department of Life Sciences
- Improving engagement from students at Whitelands
- Improving academic engagement in the Department of Media, Culture and Language
- Reducing the BAME attainment gap
- Reducing graduation costs
- Understanding gaps in access and participation across the University
- Establishing a refugee scholarship scheme in Wandsworth
- Improving the out of hours catering provision for students
- Improving postgraduate student engagement
- Ensuring that the University and Roehampton Students' Union (RSU) meet their duty of care to students
- Ensuring that Roehampton is an accessible and open community that can respond to change
- Improving engagement from off-campus students

**Report and matters arising**

Student Senate approved the report as an accurate record of the last meeting. The report had previously been submitted to the University Senate and Council. There were no matters arising not already covered in the agenda.

**Update on RSU elections**

The President of RSU gave a report on the recently concluded RSU election. Student Senate noted that there had been 69 candidates for various positions. 50% of successful

candidates were from a BAME background and 50% of the successful candidates were women. Congratulations were given to all successful candidates, including those at Student Senate, and in particular to the following:

- Daniel O'Donoghue, incoming President of RSU
- Levi Mbiya, incoming Vice-President (Education) of RSU
- George Walker, continuing Vice-President (Welfare and Community) of RSU

The Vice-Chancellor noted that he had been on campus when the elections were running, and commended those involved on the high-level of engagement with important issues that was evident within all of the campaigns.

### **Student-led budget**

The President of Roehampton Students' Union presented ideas for the £50k student-led budget, which had been collated and prioritised by RSU on behalf of Student Senate. Student Senate discussed various options at length, and considered ways in which some of the ideas could be aligned or incorporated with existing services or projects. Members of staff present agreed a number of actions, on which progress would be reported at the next meeting.

Student Senate resolved to use the £50k budget to fund the following initiatives:

- RSU Diversity and Inclusion Campaign
- Mental Health First Aid
- RSU Part Time Internships

### **University bus service**

The Director of Strategy and External Engagement gave an update on the closure of Hammersmith Bridge, and gave details on a number of options the University was considering to mitigate the impact of the closure on students. In particular, the University was considering extending its existing bus service to the south side of Hammersmith Bridge.

Student Senate was very supportive of this idea, and asked that the University consider the impact of any decisions on postgraduate students, those studying at Whitelands and those with accessibility needs, as well as members of the public. Student Senate also noted other options the University was considering, including the introduction or adoption of a bike hire service between the University and the bridge, and the lobbying of TFL.

### **Consultation on the University's mental health and wellbeing strategy**

The Director of Student Support presented a draft version of the new University strategy for mental health and wellbeing. Student Senate was very support of the strategy, but wanted to ensure that consideration was given to the following:

- Students studying off-campus or at Whitelands
- That staff training included visiting lecturers and PhD students involved with teaching
- That terminology was used carefully to reduce stigma around these issues
- That fitness to practise policies were implemented in a positive and supportive way

- That drop-in timings for services met student needs

Student Senate also noted that the University would soon be involved in a project to develop a specialised NHS service for universities.

### **Consultation on the access and participation plan**

The Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) presented a paper summarising the University's approach to preparing its access and participation plan for the next academic year. It was noted that the plan was a requirement of the University's registration with the Office for Students.

Student Senate noted in particular the needs of commuting students and the need to recognise the intersectionality between commuting students and students belonging to one or more underrepresented groups. The group also commented on the importance of ensuring access for FE students and care leavers, and of providing support to students who are entering the University based on an unconditional offer.

### **Update on the mitigating circumstances process**

Following the concerns raised at the previous meeting of Student Senate, the University Secretary and Registrar presented a verbal update on work that had subsequently been undertaken. A working group had been convened to trial an electronic mitigating circumstances process, and members of Student Senate were encouraged to join this group. It was also noted that additional training had been provided to staff following concerns that were raised about confidentiality. The University Secretary and Registrar also invited members to submit any feedback on the mitigating circumstances process to him via email.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked all present for their contributions. In particular, thanks were given to ChuChu Nwagu and Liam Parsons, who were attending their last meeting of Student Senate before their terms as sabbatical officers of RSU ended. The Vice-Chancellor noted that this was the last meeting of Student Senate in the current academic year, and that Secretariat would manage a process to appoint the new membership in the autumn. Current members of Student Senate would be eligible for reappointment.

*George Turner  
Deputy University Secretary  
May 2019*