

## UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON STUDENT SENATE

### Report to Council from its meeting on 27 November 2019

Committee Chair: Professor Jean-Noël Ezingard

The 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the University Student Senate was held on Wednesday 27 November 2019. It was the first meeting of Student Senate of the 2019-20 academic year. The Vice-Chancellor welcomed all present and noted that Student Senate was a very important and unique forum, in which the development of important initiatives could be discussed and matters decided.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Vice-Chancellor talked about the ongoing strike action and the work the University was doing to mitigate the impact of the strike on students. The Vice-Chancellor also discussed the renewed focus on student experience as set out in the new enabling strategies, particularly the Student Education Strategy.

#### Report from the last meeting

Student Senate approved the enclosed 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.

#### Roehampton Students' Union Priorities for 2019-20

Student Senate received a report from the RSU Sabbatical Officers about their priorities for the 2019-20 academic year. In brief, the Officers had five overarching aims:

- Improving services
- Updating procedures
- Providing academic support to students
- Working with student interns
- Carrying out long-term strategic planning

It was noted that initiatives should be inclusive of commuter students, and that the University and RSU may be able to do more joined-up work around online services. It was agreed that students would be consulted on discussions around sports facilities at Whitelands.

#### Academic Guidance

Student Senate received a paper from the Vice-Provost (Education) setting out University initiatives relating to academic guidance. It was noted that the University's approach to academic guidance was embedded in the new enabling strategies, and that timing and consistency had been identified as key issues. Student Senate noted improving NSS scores relating to academic guidance, which suggested that the University had been making progress. In 2019-20, the University would be focussing

on implementing Studiosity, the new online academic guidance service, and rolling out virtual office hours. Student Senate discussed the need to ensure that Academic Guidance Tutors are visible to students and that students are given training on how to use Skype in a formal setting. Student Senate agreed that while lecturers have enough time to implement University initiatives in respect of academic guidance, it would be useful to communicate this more effectively.

## **RAFA 2**

Student Senate received a paper from Marilyn Holness, Director of Student Engagement, on the RAFA 2 Project, which had recently finished. Student Senate noted that RAFA 2 was a two-year funded project that was collaborative and had been student-led. The paper set out a range of outcomes, and Student Senate noted that the findings of the project would inform and underpin the University's future strategy.

## **Tackling Racial Harassment in Universities**

Student Senate received a paper from Mark Ellul, University Secretary and Registrar. It was noted that a programme of work had been initiated to tackle racial harassment at Roehampton, which included consideration of University culture, reporting and complaints handling, and impact of racial harassment on student achievement. It was noted that students should be involved in this work. Student Senate considered that reporting procedures could be more accessible and that understanding of what constitutes racial harassment could be improved. The importance of distinguishing between reporting and complaining was also noted.

## **Top of your agenda – Reflections and Priorities**

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

- The University involves students in all its committees
- It is important that the Security Team is visible and that vacancies are filled as quickly as possible
- The University has seen an increase in the number of BAME doctoral students
- The University could extend opening hours for PGR research spaces after 8pm
- Categorical marking has been well-received
- The University acts on student feedback
- The University could communicate more effectively where it has improved its services
- The University has improve BAME student engagement
- There could more emphasis on student engagement at University events
- The University delivered classes in the evening but communication could be more effective regarding other University events and services that are available in the evenings
- The University collaborates effectively with students

- The Department of Drama, Theatre and Performance could advertise the range of career opportunities available to graduates more effectively
- Programme boards have become more effective
- Students on counselling programmes need more effective emotional support
- Generally, the student voice is very effective
- There could be more opportunities for Whitelands students to give feedback
- Students receive excellent academic support
- There could be more formative assessments, particularly during the second and third years
- The quality of teaching is high and students have strong relationships with academics
- Some students are less involved with the University community
- International students are well supported but some events are organised at inconvenient times
- The University has a strong sense of history and community
- Attendance in lectures is generally quite low

Next meeting: 2pm, 19 February 2020

*George Turner*  
*Deputy University Secretary*  
*November 2019*