

Record of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Governing Body of Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance held on Monday 13 September 2021 at 14.00 online

Present: Monisha Shah (Chair)
Clarie Middleton (Principal)
Akshita Brahma (Student governor)
Rod Brown
Sylvia Darkwa Ohemeng
Rogan Dixon
Anni Domingo
Caroline Jenkins (Staff governor)
George Littlejohn
Don Massey
Professor Mike Saks
Professor Steven Spier
Jennifer Sims
Thomas Wilson (Staff governor)

In attendance: Colin Warner – Interim Director of Finance and Operations
Joseph Lowe – Director of Finance and Operations
Professor Mary Oliver – Vice Principal
Angela Taylor – Academic Registrar
Jim Benson - Secretary

2020/108 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Akshita Brahma (Kuhu), who was attending for the first time, and Anni Domingo, Professor Mary Oliver and Joseph Lowe who were attending in person for the first time.

2020/109 Apologies

Apologies were received from, Sarah Howard and Hassan Mahamdallie.

2020/110 Conflict of Interest Declarations

It was noted that the Chair had standing declarations due to her appointments on the Board of the Office for Students and as Senior Independent Member (Chair) of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The Secretary had a standing declaration a due to his appointment at the University of East London.

2020/111 Confirmation of minutes

[Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2021](#)

The Board approved the minutes for publication.

2020/112 Matters arising from the minutes

112.1 The Principal stated that all nominations for Fellowships and Honorary Fellowships were confirmed as set out in her report.

112.2 The Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that the IT Strategy should be available for consideration by the Board in January 2022.

112.3 It was noted that appointments to the Board and committee membership was set out in the paper from Governance Committee. The Secretary added that the revised Governors' Development Plan would be presented to Governance Committee in 2021/22 before coming to the Board and that a full effectiveness review for committees and the Board would need to be conducted within the next 18 months.

112.4 The Principal confirmed that the discussions about making the College more inclusive and diverse related only to certain areas, such as in addressing neuro-diversity, rather than the College as a whole. She confirmed action was being taken forward and a report would be forthcoming in January 2022. It was agreed to remove this item from Matters Arising.

112.5 The Principal confirmed that the [full Health and Safety report with RAG ratings was being taken forward](#).

[112.6 It was noted that all other matters had either been attended to or appeared on the agenda.](#)

2020/113 Principal's Report

113.1 The Chair reminded colleagues of the need to have papers with the Board Secretary at least seven days in advance of the meeting. She added that it was difficult for the Board to do its job properly if papers were arriving late. The Principal acknowledged this on behalf of the SMC.

113.2 The Principal advised that the main items to note in her report related to student recruitment and the penultimate update of the Risk Register.

113.5 In response to a question about the risk register, the Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that this was not the final version and it would be reviewed by a strategic group comprising the Principal, the Vice Principal, the Academic Registrar and himself.

113.6 The Chair summarized that the Board was deeply disappointed with the recruitment in the DMTA area for 2021/22 and, being mindful of the College's financial position, asked that the proposed review was taken forward with a sense of urgency. She added that the positive developments should be noted including the

list of Fellows and Honorary Fellows, the partnership with the Notting Hill Academy of Music and the appointment of a Creative Industries Relationship Manager.

2020/114 Academic Report

114.1 Ms Jenkins left the meeting for this item.

114.2 Professor Oliver spoke to the paper stating that it updated details submitted to the Board in June 2020 adding that discussions with staff in both Schools would take place over the next two weeks before these plans were finalised.

114.3 The following points were confirmed:

- i. That students would be informed of the changes when they returned to the College later in September 2021;
- ii. the Professor of Theatre and Performance was also the Head of Research and the former title was established only for the current postholder.

114.4 The Board voted unanimously to adopt the proposals set out in the paper

114.5 Ms Jenkins re-joined the meeting.

2020/115 Student Report

115.1 The President of the Students' Union spoke to the paper reporting that it outlined the activities undertaken since the Students' Union Executive assumed office in August 2021. She added that the Students' Union priorities for the forthcoming year included enhancing the student experience, promoting inclusivity and seeing that staff training and related policies were in place for addressing gender equality and ensuring the appropriate use of personal pronouns. The President of the Students' Union stated that the Executive wanted students to feel that these issues were taken seriously and they would seek to provide support to students who studied in groups where there was significant gender imbalance. She added that a buddying system was being developed to help students adjust.

115.2 The Board welcomed these developments and appreciated the insights offered on the student experience. The Chair added that the Board were available for advice and support as it was important for there to be a close and productive working relationship with the Students' Union. She added that the impact and insights were welcomed by the Board.

2020/116 [Finance Report](#)

116.1 The Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that the report focused on the systems issues as he was still working on the annual accounts and the budget. He confirmed that arrangements for the annual audit were progressing satisfactorily.

116.2 The Director of Finance and Operations stated that the PSF system was fit for purpose but the installation had not been completed. Examples of this included:

- i. The system had been set up with 13 reporting periods instead of 12 which resulted in the misapplication of auto-generated prepayments-this had now been resolved;
- ii. the VAT partial exemption system was not working and had the potential to corrupt data-this was unresolved despite there being some progress.

116.3 The Chair of the F&GP Committee added that it had been agreed not to start generating financial reports until there was confidence in the information being produced. He requested that after the budget and annual accounts had been attended to the five-year financial projections should be produced.

116.4 The Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that corrections to the systems would take months to implement but financial reporting would have to evolve in line with managers' ability to use the information generated. He added that the contract with Sodexo had been extended for a further year.

116.5 The Principal reported that, despite the challenges faced by the College, income had increased in 2020/21. It was noted that the full impact of the cost of operations and of lack of control over financial systems had yet to be calculated. The Chair stated that while the current position in relation to financial systems and reporting was understandable, there needed to be controls to prevent this happening again. The Director of Finance and Operations confirmed that he was satisfied that appropriate controls were now in place.

2020/117 Key points from minutes of committees

Governance Committee – 1 July 2021

117.1 The Chair reported the following matters:

- i. That 2-3 new Board appointments would be sought in 2021/22-the Chair elect and the Chair of Governance Committee agreed to review the skills matrix and identify where appointments were needed;
- ii. appointing members to Audit Committee, possibly from the new governor appointments, was seen as a priority;
- iii. the Governors' Development Plan would be revised in 2021/22;
- iv. effectiveness reviews for committees and the Board would be planned in 2021/22 for delivery in 2022/23;

- v. Anni Domingo had agreed to join the F&GP Committee and Remunerations Committee;
- vi. the terms of reference for F&GP Committee had been revised to state that there would be between 4-6 independent members appointed to that Committee;
- vii. it was confirmed that the President of the Students' Union would remain a member of the Governance Committee;
- viii. the Principal agreed to advise on the replacement for Colin Campbell on Remunerations Committee, [possibly the HR advisor that the College had engaged with].

117.2 The terms of office of the Governors set out in the paper was noted by the Board. It was further noted that there would need to be an election amongst academic staff for the replacement of Thomas Wilson before he demitted office on 31 December 2021.

117.3 It was also noted that there needed to be an election for a further student representative. The Principal reported that Michael Oyar, Student Observer, had returned to the College. The Board confirmed that he could seek to apply to one of the student positions.

2020/118 National Student Survey 2021 – Results and Analysis [BG 1-9-6]

118.1 The Academic Registrar spoke to the paper stating that it provided some analysis of the National Student Survey 2021. It was noted that there was considerable improvement on the results from the National Student Survey 2020, with some areas scoring 100% satisfaction rating. However, there were some disappointing outcomes such as those in Events Management and Acting.

118.2 The Board were pleased to note the improvements on the previous year but requested further analysis:

-A comparison with the National Student Survey 2019 conducted prior to the pandemic;

-details of the anonymised comments from respondents;

-breakdown of the National Student Survey questions by programme.

118.3 The Principal stated that while she was pleased with the improvements on the previous year, she asked the Board to note that the poor performance in certain areas was not an aberration. She added that this information would help inform the reviews being conducted by the Vice Principal.

2020/119 Presentation of the new website

119.1 It was confirmed that this presentation would take place at a later date.

Formal Business

2020/120 Sector Developments

120.1 The Secretary advised that there were two matters to note:

- i. The Comprehensive Spending Review which might give rise inter alia to revisiting the plans outlined in the Augur Report about lowering tuition fees;
- ii. the proposals from the OfS to publish information on Vice Chancellors' and Principals' salaries.

120.2 This was noted by the Board.

2020/121 Office for Students

Quality and Standards Consultation [BG 1-9-7a]

121.1 The Secretary reported:

- i. On 20 July 2021 the Office for Students (OfS) issued a consultation on Quality and Standards in higher education. A response is required by 27 September 2021.
- ii. The OfS had also published its response to the consultation on regulating quality and standards in higher education held between 17 November 2020 and 25 January 2021. This consultation was conducted to obtain views about the general approach to defining and regulating quality and standards. It made preliminary policy proposals about the minimum baseline requirements the OfS would set. The response to the initial consultation forms the basis of the proposals in the latest consultation but included removal of all references to the UK Quality Code from the guidance in the regulatory framework.
- iii. Consideration needed to be given on the impact of these proposals and whether the College should provide a response or be part of a collective response (GuildHE).

121.2 The Board agreed to be guided by the Principal on whether to submit a response to the consultation.

Other Reports and Consultations [BG 1-9-7b]

121.3 The Board confirmed that it found these reports useful.

2020/122 Any other business

122.1 The Secretary was asked to confirm whether the Board meeting in March 2022 was on 24 March 2022 or 31 March 2022. The Secretary stated that he thought it was on 31 March 2022 but agreed to confirm.

122.2 The Chair thanked the Board for the support it gave her during her time in office. She added that she had learnt a lot from the Board and was pleased in the way it welcomed her as someone new to the sector. The Board thanked the Chair for the leadership and dedication shown while in office. The Chair-elect added that, due to the individual impact made by the Chair, the Board had become a strong team. The Principal stated that staff appreciated the vision shown by the Chair and the assurance she provide the College with. She added that the whole College appreciated the Chair's contribution.

2020/123 Dates of future meetings

The Chair asked the Board to note the dates of meetings for 2021/22.

Monday 13 September 2021

Thursday 25 November 2021 (to incorporate an away day to start at 10am)

Thursday 20 January 2022

Thursday 31 March 2022

Thursday 5 May 2022

Thursday 30 June 2022

Action	Meeting	Responsible	Update
100.5i Approach various Board members to confirm whether they would be willing to accept appointments to Committees from 2021/22	1 July 2021	Chair elect	ASAP
100.5ii ii. Appoint 2-3 new Board members in 2021/22	1 July 2021	Governance Committee	TBC
100.5iii Revise Governors' Development Plan in 2021/22	1 July 2021	Governance Committee	TBC
100.5iv Plan effectiveness reviews for committees and the Board in 2021/22	1 July 2021	Governance Committee	TBC
105.2 Produce a full Health and Safety report, with RAG ratings against each action as appropriate	1 July 2021	Principal	By end of 2021
112.2 Develop an IT Strategy	1 July 2021/13 Sept 2021	Director of Finance	TBC
113 Undertake a review of student recruitment and related activities	13 Sept 2021	Vice Principal	ASAP
116.3 Produce five-year financial projections after the budget and annual accounts had been attended to	13 Sept 2021	The Director of Finance and Operations	TBC
117.1 Review the skills matrix and identify where appointments were needed	13 Sept 2021	Chair elect and the Chair of Governance Committee	20 November 2021

117.2/3 Organise academic staff and student elections for Board positions	13 Sept 2021	Principal	By end of 2021
<p>118.2 Provide further NSS analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A comparison with the National Student Survey 2019 conducted prior to the pandemic; -details of the anonymised comments from respondents; -breakdown of the National Student Survey questions by programme. 	13 Sept 2021	Academic Registrar	ASAP
122.1 Confirm whether the Board meeting in March 2022 was on 24 March 2022 or 31 March 2022.	13 Sept 2021	Secretary	ASAP