

RADA

Council Synopsis Report 2021/22

This document summarises the decisions taken and key areas of discussion at RADA Council meetings. Updates are published within one month of each meeting.

21 October 2021

Council Membership and Governance

The Council approved the appointment of Skylar Turnbull Hurd as Student Council Member and extension of tenure for independent Council members Zac Barratt and Mike Leigh.

The council discussed the urgent necessity of recruiting to the Audit and Risk Committee, noting that of two independent members, one was due to retire in Summer 2022. Members agreed that two additional independent members should be appointed and that a search firm would be engaged for this purpose. To support future recruitment to the Council, a skills audit would be completed.

Staff Changes and Transition Planning

Delays in producing a new Staff-Student Relationship Policy were discussed and it was agreed that a draft would be shared at the next Council meeting.

Members received an update from the Selection Panel for the appointment of a new Principal.

Income Generation, Finance and Audit

The Council received an update on income generation activities from RADA Business and the Development team. A report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee on outlook and cashflow was noted. It was agreed that new banking arrangements would be approved by circulation before the next meeting.

Revised Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Audit and Risk Committee were approved. Risk registers were reviewed, noting that the primary risks remained unchanged (financial position, banking arrangements, COVID impact and staff turnover).

Anti-racism and Equity

The Council received an update on anti-racism activities. It was agreed that the Chair and Director of Equity would work together to review action plans and to formulate an action plan for Council Members

The Council agreed to extend the Terms of Reference for the Accountability Panel to the end of 2021/22 and to appoint a new Chair to the panel.

The Council noted the extension of the anti-racism consultancy work with Leeds Beckett University until the end of 2021/22.

Education, Training and Student Experience

Reports were received on Acting Training, Technical Training, Student and Academic Services and Access and Participation, in addition to the minutes of Academic Board meetings and a report from the Training Committee.

Format and Content of Council Meetings

Members agreed that the future format and structure of Council meetings should be reviewed by the new Chair and that a proposal should be made to members.

28 January 2022

Publication of Minutes

Members received a proposal to publish redacted minutes. It was agreed that a synopsis report should be drafted as an alternative and presented to the next meeting.

Council Membership and Governance

The Council noted the appointment (previously approved by circulation) of Dan Collins as Staff Council Member and Adrian Chelvatheebam as Student Council Member. The appointment of Tim Clark to the Audit and Risk Committee pending a permanent appointment was approved. Members received a report from the Nominations Committee, noting that it was actively recruiting new members of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee and a new Co-chair for the Accountability Panel.

Report from the Senior Leadership Team

Members discussed the number of graduates from 2020/21 who had not yet found agency representation and the possible impact of timetable changes due to the pandemic. Signing rates were confirmed as in line with expectations.

Education and Training

It was noted that the Annual Programme Monitoring Report had been reviewed by Academic Board in advance of submission to the validating body (King's College London). Two new members (Jai Morjaria and Abraham Pappola) had joined the Training Committee and Joe Kloska would replace Robin Soans as Co-chair from October 2022. Members discussed opportunities to open channels of communications with the student body, including attending productions and meeting students during the induction period.

Safeguarding

The Council received a draft of the revised Staff-Student Relationship Policy, noting that legal advice had been sought on foreseeability of injury. The policy would undergo a consultation process with students and staff before returning to Council for approval.

Further action was required in order to address actions identified by the Office for Students ("OfS") at a Prevent Review Meeting. The Registrar was engaging with the OfS and the DfE to update RADA's action plan and meet the deadline for compliance of 6 March 2022.

Anti-racism and Equity

The Council received a report from the Accountability Panel. Consultancy arrangements with Leeds Beckett University to the end of 2021/22 were being finalised. The Director of Equity agreed to meet with current students to discuss their concerns about actions taken in response to the 2020 Student

Action Plan. Development of the Council's anti-racism action plan was to be taken forward. The Director of Equity would formalise the relationship between her work and RADA Business.

Revenue and Income Generation

A report from RADA Business was received, noting its performance in the first part of the year. Members were updated on the financial relationship between RADA and RADA Business. A Development report was also received and challenges to the Stage Critical campaign arising from the pandemic were discussed.

Finance and Audit

Members received a report on outlook, cash flow and going concern, noting that the Director of Finance and Operations had met with the OfS to discuss the progress of the Specialist Funding consultation.

The Annual Report was noted by Council, in addition to a report on the 13 January meeting of Audit and Risk Committee. 2020-21 accounts for RADA and RADA in Business and Letters of Representation were approved subject to minor amendments to be finalised by the Chairs of Audit and Risk and Finance and General Purposes committees and the Director of Finance and Operations.

Appointment of Principal

Council approved the appointment of Niamh Dowling as Principal of RADA.

Staff Matters

There had been no cost-of-living wage increase in 2021/22 and it was agreed that a formal communication would be sent to staff to confirm this.

17 March 2022

Council Membership and Governance

Members approved the following appointments:

- Laura Witt - Council Secretary
- Shona Spence – Member of Council and Audit and Risk Committee
- Helen Selwood - Member of Council and Audit and Risk Committee
- Caroline Spicer – Member of Council and Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Jake Steele - Co-chair of the Accountability Panel
- Joe Kloska – Co-chair of Training Committee (with effect from October 2022)

The Council discussed options for the conduct of an external governance effectiveness review. It was agreed that detailed terms of reference should be drafted for approval by circulation.

Two members of the Nominations Committee were due to retire therefore expressions of interest in joining the committee were invited.

Members discussed the possible implementation of a scheme to maintain the engagement of retired Council members with RADA.

Report from the Senior Leadership Team

SLT updated members on planning activities for the next academic year. The Director of Development and Public Affairs was coordinating RADA's application to be recognised as world-leading for specialist funding purposes, and Niamh Dowling contributed to the submission. Should RADA be successful the level of funding would be confirmed following further consultation with providers by OfS.

Revenue and Income Generation

Council received a presentation from RADA Business on a project undertaken with a corporate client to effect organisational change through coaching and verbatim theatre. A report was also received from the Development Department, which was continuing to work on the Stage Critical campaign and to develop relationships with a number of external partners.

Finance

Members received a report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee outlining RADA's current financial position, forecast and budget assumptions. A note outlining the status of RADA's current investments was also received.

Education and Training

Academic Board had met on 13 January to approve the Annual Programme Monitoring Report prior to submission to King's College London. Council received a report from the Training Committee and discussed issues relating to IT infrastructure and green room space for technical students. The Training Committee also assumed governance oversight of the Buddy Scheme for graduates.

Safeguarding

A new Staff-Student Relationship Policy was approved following consultation on the draft version with staff and students. Members received an update on progress on safeguarding matters from SLT, including detailed responses to the Council's earlier Safeguarding Report, which had outlined a number of recommendations.

Higher Education Regulation

Council received a briefing paper summarising the various consultations being undertaken by OfS on proposed changes to the regulatory framework and the implications of confirmed changes to the B3 condition of registration. RADA had responded to two of the consultations. Members also received a briefing note from GuildHE on the DfE's response to the Augar review and discussed the difficulties that would emerge for arts institutions should funding be linked to graduate earnings.

Items from Staff and Student Governors

Issues related to staff morale and to changes to acting training arising from anti-racism action plans and COVID were discussed.

23 June 2022

Council Membership and Governance

The following members stood down as trustees:

- Josh Berger

- Ajay Chowdhury (resigned)
- Ros Haigh
- Helen Slater (ex officio)
- Andrew Such
- Prof. Michael Worton

Members approved revisions to the Statement of Primary Responsibilities.

The Council agreed that the proposed Governance Effectiveness review should take the form of an initial internal review in 2022-23, in advance of an external review towards the end of the academic year or in the following academic year. It was agreed that an internal review should take place every three years to coincide with the Chair's term of office.

Tamar Thomas was appointed interim Council Member for Safeguarding until September 2022, with expressions of interest sought from other members in respect of a longer-term appointment.

Tim Clark joined the Nominations Committee as a member.

Updates from the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal

SLT updated Council on its approach to financing and cost control. Work was being undertaken to grow commercial income streams to underpin fundraising. Embedding mental health within institutional strategy was also a priority.

The Principal provided an update on recent staff changes and outlined plans to establish transitional groups to drive change within the curriculum and the organisation. SLT was beginning work to establish a new strategy and business plan and intended to bring the Council into this process early in the new academic year.

Revenue and Income Generation

A report from RADA Business was received, noting that its contribution for the current financial year was expected to meet targets. A Development report was also received, noting staff changes within the department.

Finance and General Purposes

Council received a report from the Director of Finance and Operations, outlining RADA's current financial position and updating members on HR, recruitment, training and health and safety matters.

Members received the budget, planning assumptions, financial outlook and cashflow forecast. There was some uncertainty about income levels due to delays to the process for allocating specialist institution funding to world-leading providers. The budget was approved but would be subject to further review should the level of specialist funding be significantly lower than forecast.

Audit and Risk

A report from the Audit and Risk Committee was received. No substantial changes had been made to the risk register.

Education and Training

Minutes of recent Academic Board meetings were received. The Training Committee gave an update on its current priorities including green room space for TTSM students and display of student work in the RADA Bar. The Committee was continuing to facilitate discussions between staff and students

about the curriculum and members intended to visit classes in order to strengthen links between the training and the Council.

Anti-racism and Equity

A report from Prof. Vini Lander, RADA's anti-racism consultant from Leeds Beckett University, was received. Some departmental anti-racism action plans were still in progress. Concerns from the Accountability Panel on a lack of communication with Council were received. The Chair would make contact with members of the Accountability Panel and establish a Council anti-racism group that would connect the two bodies.

Members received an update on the progress of the (Re)framing the future: Decolonising RADA Acting and Technical Training work from Pamela Jikiemi. Data analysis was in progress and an interim report would be compiled In September 2022.

Honorary Fellowships

Members discussed the future of honorary fellowship awards. It was agreed that the Nominations Committee should review the criteria for these and return to Council with a proposal for its approval.