

RADA

Council Synopsis Report 2022-23

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

24 November 2022

Council Membership and Governance

The Council welcomed new members (appointed by circulation) Judith Buchanan, Judith Blake, Miranda Wayland. The appointment of new student governors Millie Boardman and Katherine Morton was confirmed following their election by the student body.

Members received a report from the Nominations Committee and noted the intention to review the role of Council Member for Safeguarding to ensure that RADA's approach is appropriate for a higher education provider.

Members approved a revised Honorary Fellowship Scheme subject to the addition of a procedure for removing a fellow should their actions make them incompatible with RADA's mission and values.

Finance and General Purposes

A report was received from the Director of Finance and Operations noting confirmation of specialist funding from the Office for Students.

The Chairs of Finance and General Purposes and Audit and Risk Committees recommended an assessment of going concern to the Council.

Audit and Risk

Members discussed recommendations emerging from internal audit and a finding of partial assurance for 2021-22. A management plan was in place to address the remaining actions, focusing on high and medium priority recommendations in the first instance.

The annual report and accounts were approved subject to some textual updates resulting from members' feedback.

Items from Staff and Student Governors

The Council discussed the challenges facing students as a result of rising energy costs and high inflation. The Senior Leadership team had implemented a number of initiatives to support students and agreed to provide a report to the next meeting.

Staff were thankful for a one-off payment to support them with the increased cost of living.

Education, training and student experience

The Prevent Annual Report and Accountability Return were approved for submission to the Office for Students.

Members discussed the Annual Quality Assurance Report from Academic Board and the annual report from the Student Wellbeing Service.

Anti-racism

An Anti-racism Committee had been established and would establish KPIs for the Council.

The Council received the institutional Anti-racism Action Plan, Race Equity Policy and a report from the Accountability Panel. Members proposed that the Anti-racism Committee and Accountability Panel be merged and agreed to meet to discuss membership.

Executive reports

Reports were received from the Principal, the Senior Leadership Team and the Interim Director of Development.

RADA Business

Members received a report updating them on the performance of RADA Business.

26 January 2023

Council membership and governance

The Council welcomed new trustee Judith Chan. Members approved the appointment of Jo Wardle to the Development Board.

Members noted that a call for Honorary Fellowship nominations would be made the same week, with the nomination process remaining open until the end of March 2023.

Council members would receive a new monthly newsletter and have access to a dedicated SharePoint site, to include committee papers.

Finance and General Purposes

The bank mandate was updated to reflect staff changes. Members agreed that the Financial Regulations should be reviewed at the next Finance and General Purposes meeting.

23 March 2023

Council Membership and Governance

Paul Clay and Buster Dover retired from the Council after nine years' service. Members noted that Tanya Moodie had resigned from Council.

The Council approved the re-election of the following members:

- Lolita Chakrabarti
- Tim Clark
- Maxine Peake
- John Romeo
- Tanya Rose

Members discussed the creation of a Deputy Chair role and referred this to the Nominations Committee for further consideration.

A report from the Chair of the Nominations Committee was received and members discussed the need to ensure that the Audit and Risk and Finance and General Purposes Committees were sufficiently resourced.

An update on progress with Honorary Fellowship nominations was received and members were reminded to submit any further nominations by the closing date.

Members received an update on the governance effectiveness review.

Submission of the Charity Commission annual return was noted.

Finance and General Purposes

A report from the Chair of the F&GP Committee was received. Work was ongoing to create a combined financial strategy for RADA and RADA Business.

A report from the Director of Finance and Operations was received, highlighting the need to make financial decisions in relation to RADA's new strategic plan. Members discussed a recent review of RADA's cybersecurity arrangements, emphasising the high risks and costs associated with any potential cyber-attack.

Audit and Risk

A report from the Co-chairs of the Audit and Risk Committee was received. The Committee had reconfirmed its terms of reference and was monitoring progress on outstanding actions from internal audit.

Members reviewed updated risk register in a new format. Further work was required in order to refine the register and apportion responsibility for oversight of key risks. The Committee was planning to develop a risk appetite statement.

Executive Reports

The Principal reported on key priorities, including the development of a number of new postgraduate courses. Work to create new partnerships outside of London was noted and members discussed the market for and feasibility of the proposed courses.

A report from the Senior Leadership Team was received.

Development and Fundraising

A report from the Development team was received, including information about a fundraising audit and feasibility study being undertaken. The Development Board was looking to appoint new members and trustees were asked for recommendations.

Education, training and student experience

The Training Committee had revised its terms of reference and now had a greater focus on drawing industry insight into the Academy. Members had discussed new course proposals and had the opportunity to observe a technical rehearsal.

Academic Board minutes were received and it was noted that the timeline for submission of the new Access and Participation Plan had been extended.

A report on actions taken to support students and staff with cost of living pressures was discussed. Students were appreciative of the action taken. Rent rises were of particular concern however RADA had joined the University of London Housing Service and the student governor confirmed that the admissions team provided helpful information to applicants.

Anti-racism

A report was received from the Chair on the work of the Anti-racism Committee, which had made a number of recommendations, including that all Council committees report annually on how they have embedded anti-racism within their operation.

RADA Business

The Council received a report on RADA Business, noting Buster Dover's retirement from and Judith Chan's appointment to the RADA Business Board. A robust business model had been developed which would be integrated with RADA's overall business plan.

Other Business

Members discussed implementing drop-in sessions with Council members for staff and students.

29 June 2023

Council Membership and Governance

Members approved a role descriptor for a Deputy Chair and were advised that a call for expressions of interest in the role would be made. The Nominations Committee would co-opt additional members to oversee the appointment process. The Lead Trustee for Safeguarding responsibilities would be included in the Deputy Chair role.

Nominations for two new trustees with higher education expertise were discussed. One was placed on hold due to potential conflicts of interest. The appointment of Richard Middleton to the Council was approved.

Resignations had been received from Martin Donnelly (independent trustee), Laura Witt (Secretary) and Mel Jessop (staff governor). An election for a new Acting staff governor would be held early in the autumn term.

Members discussed the practice of holding closed meetings for independent governors and agreed that these would continue but minutes should be taken in order to make their purpose clear to staff and student Council members.

Governance Effectiveness

The Council discussed the report emerging from a review of RADA's governance conducted between January and June 2023. The report made a number of recommendations which had been translated into an action plan by the Chair and Secretary.

Executive and Business Reports

Members received a report from the Principal outlining strategic developments, including the approval of proposals for the validation of new postgraduate courses by King's College London, and the commencement of short courses in Manchester. The report also outlined recent staff changes, including the appointment of Jane O'Gara as Interim Finance Director, and a summary of activities in each department since the last Council meeting.

The Council received an updated risk register and management accounts for April 2023. Reports were also received from Development and from RADA Business.

Education, Training and Student Experience

Minutes of the May 2023 Academic Board meeting were received.

Regulatory Updates

Members received a briefing on the new Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act, noting the need to review RADA's practices once associated regulatory conditions were confirmed.

Financial Strategy

The Principal reported on the activity to improve RADA's cashflow and this was discussed by the Council. Authority was delegated to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to withdraw investments from the RADA Fund and to investigate other funding options. A working group had been established to develop an updated financial plan and an action plan for implementation at the start of 2023-24.

Committee Chair's Reports

A report was received from the Chair on the Anti-racism Committee, which he felt would operate more successfully with a new Chair. Members were asked to put themselves forward for this role.

A report was received from the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Committee would be working on a long term investment plan and intended to appoint an investment advisor. Members also received a report from the Co-chairs of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Members received a report from the Honorary Fellowship Committee. Awards would be made to Winsome Pinnock and Kathryn Hunter at the RADA graduation event on 15 July 2023.

Other Business

Members were advised that an extraordinary Council meeting would be scheduled before the end of July to approve the budget for 2023-24.