



**RCASU**

## Trustee Board

01/05/24

Royal College of Art Students' Union  
Kensington Gore  
London, SW7 2EU  
Registered charity: 1204514

Minutes:

**Attendees:**

Jacqui Moore, <i>Chair</i>	Present	Kimberley Burrows, <i>Student Trustee</i>	Partial attendance
Frank Brown, <i>External Trustee</i>	Present	Thomas Cury, <i>Student Trustee</i>	Present
Ed Pearson, <i>External Trustee</i>	Present	Ryan Lea, <i>Secretary &amp; Director</i>	Present
Gordon Mattocks, <i>External Trustee</i>	Present	John Schless, <i>College Observer</i>	Partial attendance
Roisin Sullivan, <i>Student Trustee</i>	Partial attendance	Ruby Bailey, <i>Minutetaker</i>	Present
Myles Igwebuike, <i>Student Trustee</i>	Partial attendance	Peter Robertson, <i>NUS representative</i>	Partial attendance

- **Welcome & Apologies**

- **Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest

- **Previous Board Meeting**

3.1 Minutes/Actions from Previous Board of Trustees Meeting

Approved	Y/N
Minutes of Previous Board Meeting	Y

Note on the last meeting's discussion on the EAP and Across RCA (point 5.2). AcrossRCA credit value has been amended and updated in previous minutes, as the module is worth 30 credits out of 180 overall. This will also be addressed in the SOs report (5.2).

Note on the budget conversation under the finance and risk session of the last meeting (6.2), and the possibility of introducing short-term contracts to spend excess budget. RL to explore.

Action	Responsibility	Status
Plan for designated reserve	RL	Ongoing, to feed into SU Battersea planning.
Contact JS about Student Inclusion Plans	RS	Complete
Trustees to be contacted regarding their presence at the next Student Members' Meeting	RL	Complete.
Update on food proposal to Estates	RL/AM	Ongoing, with regular discussions.
Revision of staff benefits plan has been sent to the board for review	RL	Complete.
COL data breakdown	RL	Data sent to Student Experience. (ongoing over each term)

- **Reports**

- **5.1** Chairs Report (5 minutes)

1. The position of Vice Chair is still open, so if you wish to express interest please reach out to Jacqui or Ryan.
2. The focus for the next quarter is opportunities for training and development. Trainings so far have included suicide awareness and neurodiversity, so if you have training propositions please let Jacqui know.

Noted that the Vice Chair is a position for an existing board member, and that it also could be an incoming Sabbatical Officer. Other SUs appoint Sabs as the Vice Chair and keep the position solely for Officers. This is something that can be pitched to the '24/25 incoming Sabbs, Renee and Janmejay.

- **5.2** Director's Report (10 minutes)

- Note that risk and issue log and risk register have been updated.
- Details of the recent election period, including the growth in engagement, is in the report.

Regarding the remuneration committee, it was questioned whether the SU will be tying the salary increase for union staff to the College salary increase if it is above 3%. What is the likelihood of this settlement being below 3%? If there is no chance of this being declined, would this be possible? Ongoing discussion with RL and the College.

Congratulations to the SU staff for their work during the election period, which passed complaint free and saw a great engagement increase.

Regarding the pay framework, a longer term plan was discussed (for the finance committee) to transition to better matching the College's payframe. Other universities have already introduced this, and this could be implemented as a plan over a course of years. RL and Finance Committee to explore.

Clarification requested for the emergency measure being written for non-contractible staff -clarity. It focuses on implementing emergency matters for staff on sickness to ensure their roles and responsibilities are covered in the

office. It was also suggested that a document/spreadsheet that covers staff wellbeing, such as sick days, support packages and signposting wellbeing resources was added to the remuneration committee. Confirmed that this document does exist, but follow-up required to see if it could be enhanced and a summary created for the Board in future (omitting confidential information). KB to follow up with JM and RL.

Also noted that the College is updating the committee cycle and structure, so there will be a clearer hierarchy in future.

### **5.3** Sabbatical Officer's Report (10 minutes)

- Ongoing communications with technical services following the student survey, Sabbs report and ILTS' response. Actions from the meeting yesterday with ILTS were that more time is needed to cover all the points and an additional meeting is needed to discuss [Motion 1](#) from the SU Assembly.
- Clarified that AcrossRCA is worth 30 credits out of an 180 credit system (this has been amended in the previous Board minutes). SU is working on a student-facing workshop with the Education for Academic Purposes team about AI, learning and translation.
- Together, the Sabbatical Officers are looking at College policies to try and make the language more digestible.
- Election engagement increased 44% from last year.
- SU Assembly, the first of which is on the 21st March). Sabs are due to meet with both the Motion proposers and seconders to outline what is reasonable and doable in their remaining time with the SU.
- SLSAs. Winners have been selected and trustees are invited to attend!
- Other upcoming occasions include the ArtBar mural, Mental Health Awareness Week, Green Week, 2 Summer Balls, and 51st ArtBar anniversary.
- Term 3 will see more non-academic shows in the ArtLounge and Estates have offered us the Battersea mezzanine to do shows! A possible increase of shows needs to be discussed with new Sabs due to the workload it creates.

It was noted that the workload of the non-academic shows will be reviewed within the SU, as well as whether the SOs need to be involved at all. RL is in discussion with the College regarding the implementing of an RCA curator

Congratulations expressed for Thomas, who has led on the non-academic shows the past year in the face of push backs and concerns about resourcing. This hard work has very successfully created more opportunities for shows down the line.

Board requests manifestos for the new SOs. RL to circulate.

*Kimberley Burrows left with apologies*

- **Current Affairs**

### **6.1** Board Working Group Update: Motion 2 - verbal (30 minutes)

*Roisin Sullivan joined the meeting.*

Board working group has been meeting to review the motion and its points, and reviewing the risks to decide which points are viable and which aren't. We have since received communication from UKLFI about the motion, including some points about charity objectives.

We are drafting a short, brief response to UK Lawyers for Israel which is based on NUS feedback and will then wait for Bateswell's response. Similar letters from UKLFI have been sent to other Unions who have passed this motion or similar ones.

*Myles Igwebuike joined the meeting*

A summary of the points made by Peter Robertson from NUS:

- This motion started back in October when the crisis started, so both the motion and the response from UKLFI are familiar to NUS, and it also ties in with local and national politics and the predicted response of the Commission.
- Unfortunately, charity law is not always compatible with campaigning, and sometimes will be pushed and tested as far as possible depending on the risk.
- The charity law also is also strict on political activity for charitable organisations, especially when considering how charitable objectives match with campaigning and motions such as this one. For example, previously climate change campaigning has been deemed as outside charitable objectives due to it not being localised enough. In the past it has been clear that global issues are not considered an issue that an SU can fund or expend significant charity resources on, as it doesn't directly affect students.
- Some of the UKLFI points are not applicable, such as the one stating we are not allowed to discuss the motion, and this does not go against any charitable objectives.
- The Commissioner's view is that paid Officer time cannot be used to campaign for motions like this, as it is part of SU resources.
- The majority of the demands and objectives of the motion are technically outside the SU's charitable objectives, and it must also be considered that challenging the Commission will be very resource heavy.

Discussion points:

- It was noted that how the RCASU Board responds depends on the appetite for risk. Smaller institutions like us will face a bigger challenge because of the community size and means of protest expression.
- In terms of us publishing our means of education and communication, we can publicise what our students are doing to support the motion. If they raise money, it must go to a UK registered charity. Palestine society is an interest group who started the motion, and the motion was then adopted by the student body. If a student society has been set up to campaign on a certain issue, then it is reasonable for them to do so. The SU should not campaign so vigorously as its societies, which may also help with students feeling isolated.
- It was noted that we have Middle-Eastern students, which means we do have a vested interest. We also need to proactively reach out to other Unions to see how they are tackling these restrictions. Trade unions at RCA are also wanting to see this motion pass.
- A charity cannot change their objectives suddenly, and the charity commission has taken a strict stance on Unions adhering to their objectives thus far.
- Supporting Jewish students against potential feelings of isolation and antisemitism also needs to be explored.
- On boycotting: the Union can't expend charitable funds to sever an existing contract (where you would have to pay compensation or where there is detriment). We must ensure and discuss that everyone understands what aspect/which list of BDS are being asked for (global, local etc).
- An audit paper trail needed to show everything was considered and documented and the balance of reputational risk. The commission sees this as essential. We have had an extraordinary meeting and have a working group, so these discussions and the decision making is being well-documented.

Peter Robertson is happy to talk to the smaller working group once Bateswells have sent their report. Once the report has come through, the working group will analyse it against the plan made by the extraordinary group. Another extraordinary meeting may be called.

**6.1** Finance & Risk (15 minutes)

- Note that SU spending will go back up to projected levels as we have a lot of events coming up, as well as the fee for Bateswells. In terms of the Community Fund and Community Liberation Fund, Community Fund will be reallocated into student targeted events and the Community Liberation Fund will be increasing.
- ArtBar sales were down in March because Terrace was closed and AcrossRCA deadlines, but now the terrace has reopened and sales are back up to where they should be in April. The ArtBar is difficult to project but it is doing much better than predicted at this stage, despite the recent challenges faced.

- Continue to note our aspirations to equal services across all sites! RL will be meeting with Estates about their '27 plan, as they have promised us a space in Battersea by 2027. We have purchased a proper pop-up bar in Battersea.
- RS to follow up with Halimo, Communities Officer, about the terms of the Community Liberation Fund.
- JM and RL are continuing to strategize advertisement and recruitment methods for the External Trustee Replacement in line with EDI. Currently going through a charity called 'Getting on Board', which works on expanding the diversity of boards and helping board members understand their responsibility.
- The bar is primarily for student experience, and it was discussed that we should utilise it as much as possible for exhibitions and events.
- Impact scores for risks 7,10,11 and 12. GM to flag for next time this is looked at. Will be brought to the next finance committee meeting. Action for RL.

### AOB

It was observed that this year's Spring Fete crossed over with AcrossRCA deadlines, which affected footfall. TC noted that we have raised the issue of an essentialized RCA timetable; the lack of one certainly affects resources and timetabling. The College is looking to launch something in 2024, although we don't know how detailed it will be. They are also adding more staff members to the Timetabling team.

RS noted that during the Easter Holidays workshop activities ceased at detriment to students. This is also tied in with timetabling, especially because the Easter Bank Holiday was separated from the Easter break. This is also made worse by the fact that all MAs are now 1-year only, which means bookings are crammed into a smaller time frame.

Action	Responsibility	Status
Plan for designated reserve	RL	Ongoing, to feed into SU Battersea planning.
Update on food proposal to Estates	RL/AM	Ongoing, with regular discussions.
COL data breakdown	RL	Data sent to Student Experience. (ongoing over each term)
Circulate the new Sabbatical Officers' manifestos the the Board	RL	
Exploring addition of short-term contracts to spend excess budget	RL	
Discussion about tying the SU salary increase with that of the College's	RL	Ongoing with Finance Committee
Staff wellbeing document in remuneration committee	KB/JM/RL	

Follow-up with Halimo, Communities Officer, about the terms of the Community Liberation Fund	RS	
Impact scores for risks 7,10,11 and 12 to be brought to the next Finance Committee	RL	

<b>Board of Trustees proposed dates and agenda - 17:15 - 19:00</b>		
<b>26th June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>SU Update</b></li> <li>- <b>Sabbatical Handover</b></li> <li>- <b>6 month Strategic Review</b></li> <li>- <b>2024/25 Budget Approval</b></li> </ul>	

<b>Finance &amp; Risk Sub-Committee proposed dates and agenda:</b>		
<b>23rd May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Accounts Review</b></li> </ul>	
<b>20th June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Accounts Review</b></li> <li>- <b>Budget 2024/25 Final Review</b></li> </ul>	

<b>People &amp; Remuneration Sub-Committee proposed dates and agenda:</b>		
<b>26th June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>2024/25 proposals - staff, salary signoff</b></li> <li>- <b>Staff &amp; Trustee Development review</b></li> </ul>	