

SGA Student Forum

Richmond Campus, 6th November 2018, 6:15pm, Lecture Hall 1

Staff in attendance:

Lawrence Abeln, President/Vice Chancellor
Elizabeth Robertson, Dean of Quality Assurance
Oliver Brady, Residence Life Coordinator
Jamie Macleod, Associate Dean for Student Leadership
Allison Cole-Stutz, Vice President for Student Affairs/ Dean of Students
Lisa Fuller, FM Manager/Sodexo
Safina Lakha,

SGA:

Nicholas Ceja, VP Richmond Campus
Gonzalo Diaz-Rio Varez, President

1. **Facilities/ Estates**

- *We see a lot of cosmetic changes happening around campus, but what about the real problems like toilets? Showers?*

We are upgrading the reception area in the Main Building now (to be completed by Monday), but we also have plans to repair and upgrade toilets, showers, student accommodation, common rooms and improve classrooms and study spaces. This will take some time, but we are committed to doing it. We are looking at spending £1.5 million over the next year on these important projects.

- *The maintenance request form is really difficult to use. Will we be keeping it?*

For now, yes, we will be keeping it, but we will have a receptionist in the Main Building shortly who will be able to help log requests. You can also send requests straight to fmservices.raiul.universities.uk@sodexo.com

- *I moved into Montford House in September and there were a lot of building problems. We have logged them all over the maintenance request system, but things don't ever seem to get fixed: we had a washer replaced, but we now have no dryer. We have 3 mini fridges—one of which leaks. We have a nail holding the lock on our bathroom door. Our windows don't fit well, so they rattle with the slightest breeze. We had a major flood and a gas leak this term, but security and maintenance were very slow to attend. We asked for someone to be called out, but they never attended. This is not working!*

Please continue to log calls on the maintenance portal and let us know how we can help.

You can also email us at fmservices.raiul.universities.uk@sodexo.com We will look at replacing your dryer right away

- *Are rooms checked regularly for faults like sinks, toilets, heating, sockets, etc?*

Yes, Sodexo has almost completed all room audits where staff visited each student room and classroom, study space, etc. We have made a list of red, amber, green—there is a lot to do. We are working through the list, but please let us know if we've missed something that you feel needs urgent attention.

● *What is the usage of the prayer room like?*

The security team has been checking out keycards for student/staff/faculty use of the room. We'll be able to give you a full report at the end of the term.

● *Can we get more clean water coolers that are accessible to students on the higher floor of the Main Building?*

Residence Life and facilities will have a look at places where there is enough space and there are electrical and plumbing connections. We'll update you as soon as we have a plan.

● *Could we get new microwaves in the common room? The ones we have are a fire hazard.*

Yes, Sodexo will look into this although these are replaced regularly.

2. **Opening Hours**

● *Is it possible to open Asa Briggs Hall any earlier in the morning? People commute in to use the facility (particularly the CNM Lab) and it would be nice to have more hours of use.*

There are some restrictions on the hours for teaching, but we could potentially open the lab earlier or later depending on student needs. Please let us know your preferred hours. You can contact security-ken@richmond.ac.uk

● *Can the library be open on a Saturday? What about Starbucks?*

The University has plans to keep both libraries (in Richmond and Kensington) open 24/7 in the new year. It will take a little time to secure the books and do some renovations, but this will allow for quiet study space all day & night. We will likely keep the hours of service through the circulation desks the same. We can look at keeping the Starbucks open if there is an increase in volume of students who want to use this facility.

3. **IT**

● *Are there plans to upgrade the wireless on campus?*

Some upgrades have already started, but this involves digging up cables and replacing them. There are more improvements to come. We will ask our Head of IT, Mike Hallas to communicate with students about his plans.

4. **Security**

● *Will we be increasing our security presence on campus?*

Currently that is not our plan, but we will have more front-facing reception support in the Main Building and Atlantic House. Our security guards who work in the evening are always in the office. If they have to attend to an emergency, they take a mobile phone with them and leave this number posted on the door of the security office.

5. **Academic**

● *I feel like the Transitions course is a huge waste of time. I have learned nothing and I am really frustrated.*

I think there are a variety of students registered on this course—some who have highly developed study skills and others who don't. There may be a number of students feeling this way, so please do speak to Jake Barber, Head of the Transitions programme to see what can be done. He is very willing to work with students and will find a way to make the class more interesting and constructive for you.

● *Is the Theatre major coming back to Richmond?*

It may be! We would need to find suitable facilities to run this programme as we currently don't have theatre facilities. We are moving the Richmond Business School in Kensington from 16 Young Street to a new facility on High Street Kensington. This will happen by the end of the academic year (ideally May) and will be a huge improvement. We will have 2, 40-seater classrooms, faculty offices and improved study spaces.

6. **Catering**

● *Sometimes there is no food left in the dining hall by the time I get there to have dinner. What can be done?*

There should always be food available for people during our opening hours. If it is not, please ask the staff or speak to Diana (Richmond) or Daniella (Kensington). You can also feed back to us over email at catering-hill@richmond.ac.uk

● *Could we have better options for people with special dietary needs like vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian?*

If we know about your specific needs, we can cater better for them, so please do let us know! It is best to stop in to the office (in the kitchen) to meet with us, but you can also email if it's more convenient. catering-hill@richmond.ac.uk

7. **Cleaning**

● *Cleaners are really loud when they work in the morning—talking on their phones, singing, crashing about. Can we ask them to keep it down?*

Yes, please pass on times, locations, dates and we will speak to the particular cleaners. You can contact us at fmservices.raiu1.universities.uk@sodexo.com

● *Toilets and showers in residence halls don't appear to be cleaned over the weekends. Can they be?*

All toilets and showers should be cleaned over the weekend and rubbish should be emptied. Lisa will check in on this.

8. **Admissions**

● *The information I got about applying for my visa before I started at Richmond was not very informative. I had to pay a lot of money to speed up at the process.*

We will feed this back to the Admissions Team. If you have further questions about immigration, please come to see us in the Student Affairs Office.

● *I've heard about a lot of new students getting scholarships for various reasons and given what they've told me, I could have qualified for this at the time I was admitted to Richmond. Why wasn't I told about them?*

We will feed this back to the Admissions Team. If you have further questions about funding and support, please see Jason Elliot in the Taylor Library.

9. **Financial Assistance**

● *Returning students can only qualify for financial assistance if they have a GPA of 3.0 or better. Sometimes the reason their GPAs are not so great is because they are stressed out about money. Is there a way to reconsider this and widen the scope?*

This is something we can look at. Currently there is a very limited amount of money set aside to help students with financial difficulties. In order to manage the large group of applications that come in, the committee has limited consideration to 3 requirements: a GPA of 3.0 or better, positive engagement in student life, and not currently receiving other financial assistance from Richmond. These are measurable requirements where need is harder to assess. I will speak to the finance team about a hardship fund—which is available at most other universities.

10. Trips

● *I understand that there are some faculty-led trips and some Student Affairs trips being offered through the University. One faculty member commented in our class that Student Affairs would not support a student trip to Cuba. Could I ask why this is? Are there plans for other trips?*

When the Student Affairs team consider offering a trip to students, we look at 3 criteria: safety, cost and the trip's relation to an academic course or a cultural exchange/student leadership/community building opportunity. The Cuba trip caused concerns in all 3 areas and so it was a trip we didn't feel we could support.

We are offering trips to St. Ives, Cambridge, Oxford, Ireland or potentially Scotland and Iceland in the next term. Please have a look on line and watch for our 'This Week at Richmond' emails.

11. Community Standards

● *Noise is a big problem outside of the main building and within the residence halls. I sometimes wake up exhausted because I can't sleep. What can we do to stop this?*

Please lodge a complaint through the security office and with your RA/RD. It is really important for us to have a log of complaints so we can follow up effectively with students. Some students are respectful and understand community standards—others are new to community living and will push boundaries in the area of behaviour.

If you don't want to get out of bed, you can call security on 020 8332 8230!

Thank you so much for attending! If you have further feedback or want to follow up on any of the issues above, please contact us at student.government@richmond.ac.uk or at studentaffairs@richmond.ac.uk