

Student Government Forum

Monday, 5th November, ABH 216, 6pm

Staff in attendance:

Dr Lawrence Abeln, President

Elizabeth Robertson, Dean of Quality Assurance

Camilla Davis, Deputy Registrar

Dr Dan O'Meara, Associate Dean of Student Support and Career Services

Chelsea Ranger, Residence Life Coordinator/Kensington

Lisa Fuller, FM Manager (Sodexo)

Allison Cole-Stutz, Vice President for Student Affairs/ Dean of Students

Students in attendance:

Gonzalo Diaz-Rio Varez (SGA)

Orianna Guzman (SGA)

Kieren Bussey (SGA)

Leah Wood (SGA)

Angelica Franco (SGA)

Benoit Pensaert (SGA)

Jamie Kingsley

1. Estates and Facilities

●Water Fountains in 16 & 17 Young Street

Are there plans to have water fountains at 16 & 17 Young Street?

There is water available in 16 Young Street, but the University will soon be vacating this building to move the Business School to an upgraded facility on High Street Kensington. Sodexo will look at putting in vending machines in buildings where water is not available.

●New Home of the Richmond Business School

When will the move to the new building happen?

The move from 16 Young Street to HSK will be complete by the end of the academic year. The building will have 2, 40 person classrooms, study spaces, faculty offices and will be a huge improvement on what we currently have.

●Changes to the Libraries at both campuses

There are plans to open the Richmond library 24/7 from January for study and a similar plan to open the library in Kensington with some renovations.

We will need to secure the books in the library and provide quiet spaces for students to sit and study without distractions. This exam period, hours will be extended and other study spaces (Upper and Lower Dining hall in ATL and unused classrooms in MB) will be available for quiet study.

●Changes to the reception area at both campuses (MB & ATL)

You may have noticed some changes at the Richmond campus in the reception area.

We are in the midst of renovating the main reception area of the Main Building which will include a reception desk staffed during regular business hours. The receptionist will offer support to visitors and students and be a more welcoming face of the University. We have similar plans for a reception desk in ATL.

●Maintenance Portal & General Maintenance issues

The maintenance portal is difficult to use and takes a long time to wade through all the steps. Are we keeping it?

For now, we are keeping it, but Sodexo would like to hear your feedback on how to improve it. The receptionist in the Main Building and (eventually) at Atlantic House will also be able to help with requests if you prefer to do this face to face.

●Heating across both campuses

The heating across both campuses varies from building to building. How can we control it?

Sometimes you can control it at the radiators and sometimes you can't! It depends on the building. Maintenance will work with residence life to inform students how to control it in the residence halls. If there are problems in classrooms and offices, please let the maintenance team know.

●Common Rooms in MB & ATL

We will be upgrading student common rooms in both ATL and MB.

We would really love students' feedback on what they want out of a common room. The plan is to make zones for eating, relaxing, quiet study, etc. We can do this with some new furniture, but also with a few renovations. We plan to open the back portion of the common room in the Main Building too.

●Satellite buildings in Kensington

Are there plans to give up Collingham Gardens?

Not currently, no. We have a long term lease on the building and it has been a very popular residence hall although it is quite small.

●Upgrades to student bedrooms

In addition to the upgrades to the common areas and reception areas, we are working through a plan to upgrade student bedrooms. We are doing room audits so we can see where we need to do the most work. We will then build a plan to work through each building and upgrade everything.

●Upgrades to public toilets

Public toilets are also on the list of areas to renovate.

Audits are taking place now and Sodexo is working on a plan to work through each building and upgrade.

●Gym Facilities in Richmond

The gym in Richmond isn't great. Are there plans to upgrade it?

It is also on the list. It is a quite small room, but there are things we can do down there. It will never be a fully equipped gym like you would find at David Lloyds or Virgin, but within our space and insurance constraints we can certainly do some different things. We can also look at partnerships with larger gyms in the area.

●ATM on campus/ contactless payments

We would like to look into getting an ATM back on the Richmond campus.

Previously this machine charged you for use. We'd like to offer this free of charge if we can get a local bank to sponsor it. We would also like to look into contactless payment methods

so that we can go cashless as a campus. The on-line store is already live on the website.

- **Student store**

Is there a space where we could sell notebooks, pens, etc?

We could do this through a vending machine in the common room or potentially just sell it out of the café in the Main Building. This is less of an issue in Kensington where we are so close to local amenities. We could offer University merchandise through the cafes as well.

2. Registry/ Academic

- **Exam Schedule**

Thank you for publishing the final exam schedule so promptly! This really helps students.

- **Feedback on attendance policy**

The SGA and the appeals group met in advance of this forum to give feedback on the University's attendance policy. SGA will be feedback to the students.

- **Participation in Graduation for PG students**

Because PG programmes run from September to September, postgraduate students are not able to participate in the May graduation ceremony and so have to wait 8 months to graduate. Is it possible to allow PG students to participate in the May ceremony (and obviously not get their degree certificates?)

I think there are ways to do this. PG students participating in the ceremony would be 'candidates for' the degree, not graduates, but they would also need to understand that at the time of the ceremony, they will have only completed 2/3 of the course. The QA and Registry teams will discuss this further.

- **Faculty-led trips**

At the time I signed on to the MA in International Relations, I was told there would be a number of faculty-led trips, but on arrival, I have discovered there aren't any!

The website does state that there will be trips to Oslo, Brussels and the Hague. We will feed this back to the course leader and see what the plans are.

There are a number of Student Affairs-run trips every term. You can find them on the website.

3. Communications

- **IT solutions**

Communications across the campuses continues to be poor. Are there IT solutions like pop up messages through Wifi, etc that we could consider?

The SGA will speak to Mike Hallas, head of IT about these possibilities.

- **Ways to access SGA & Student Affairs**

We would really like to talk to students and get their feedback, but we are struggling to get students to answer emails, come to forums, etc.

We are here in the office every day and try to host as many events and activities as we can to attract students. If you have feedback, please let us know!

4. Careers Support

- **Involving Alumni**

Are there plan to host more career events with alumni?

Yes! It's great when we can coordinate with club leaders and others to host these events.

We have some really talented alumni who are very willing to come to campus and speak to students, so we will be doing much more of this in future.

- **Portal Upgrades and RLA**

We are working on upgrading our careers portal and are offering more resources for career development.

There's a lot going on in student leadership/careers development, so please watch this space and get involved!

5. SGA Vision/Mission & Budget

- **Mission of the SGA/Feedback**

The SGA works to advocate for students and enhance the student experience, but we need your help!

We want your feedback and your support to make Richmond a great place to study. If you have ideas, suggestions on how we can do this, please let us know.

- **Budget & transparency on how money is spent**

The SGA budget is £10,000 per year. It is split into 4 categories of expenditure: Senate budget, Events & Careers, Executive Budget and Winter Ball. All of the SGA events are generally full to capacity and money brought in from events is plowed back into the student experience. We are happy to publish our budget on line so students can see it. Please ask us if you have questions or concerns.

Thank you for attending!

The Richmond Student Forum is tomorrow (6th November at 6:15pm in the Library, lecture Hall)