



Students' Union Trustee Board

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board
Tuesday 31st May 2016 – EE G020

Present:

Wesley Hudson (President & **Chair**) - WS
Lewis Arnold (VP Education) - LA
Hemaka Pathirana (VP Student Activities) - HP
Jill Wilson (External Trustee) - JW
Natalie Hanson (External Trustee) - NH
Diane Noble (Student Trustee) - DN
Alice Gentle (Student Trustee) - AG
Elaine Spalding (new External Trustee) - ES
Paul Kellard (new Student Trustee) - PK

In attendance:

Sophie Williams (SU Chief Executive) – SW
Samina Fiaz (SU HR & Admin Coordinator, also Minuting Secretary) - SF

1. Attendance and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Trustees and Officers to the meeting. Apologies were noted for Matt Sargent (Student Trustee), Felicity Wolfenden (new Student Trustee) and Margaret Jolley (new external Trustee).

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. The Summary of Actions were also approved. It was declared that Paul Kellard and Elaine Spalding (new Trustees) would remain in the room until their appointments were ratified.

3. Matters arising

None declared.

4 Declaration or Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

5 Appointment of new Trustees

The Board approved the appointments of the new Trustees, Elaine Spalding and Paul Kellard.

The Appointments would also be ratified at the next Student Council meeting

6. Administration Matters

6.a. Terms of Reference of Board

The updated Terms of Reference needed approving and it was noted that one Student Trustee position was still available. The Terms of Reference were approved.

6 b Schedule of Agenda Items for 2016/17

The Schedule of agenda items was similar to the 2015-16 schedule, only minor amendments had been made. All members of the Board were in favour so the Schedule was approved.

6 c Annual report of complaints

No complaints had been received in this academic year. The WSU website had been updated with a complaints form for ease of reference for students, no complaints had been received since then.

7. Finance Matters

7 a Monthly Management Accounts Jan – April 2016

7.a.1. SW gave an overview of the above, which had been to the Finance Sub Committee on 10/05/16. SW confirmed the Accounts had been submitted to the University. It was requested that the draft minutes of the Finance Sub- Committee be approved by and circulated to the Trustee Board.

The Management Accounts were approved after a show of hands with all members of the Trustee Board in favour.

7 b Budget 2015-16 and 2016-17

SW informed the Board that there had been no further indication on the 2016/17 block grant from the University. SW updated the new Trustees on University funding and mentioned that the SU was moving away from focussing on commercial services which had caused issues for the SU. It was requested that the Finance Sub Committee could be convened as soon as a figure was received from the University

7 c Appointment of Union's auditors 2016-18

Three tenders had been received from Crowe Clarke Whitehill, Knox Cropper and Haines Watts. Knox Cropper had been appointed as the new auditors after a decision by the Finance Subcommittee based on the information provided by each company. Some good references had also been received about Knox Cropper from similar sized Unions. Stephen Anderson, the Knox Cropper representative had, also, come in to meet with SW and Robert Cox and had come across as very keen and knowledgeable.

8. Governance Matters

8 a Board Subcommittees

SW provided a brief update to the Board on discussions held at the last Finance Subcommittee, as per the points above and of the HR Subcommittee.

8 b Reserves Policy

SW clarified that SU wasn't meeting its current Reserves Policy, which required the SU to maintain 6 months' operating costs. Research had been undertaken in practice at other SUs and common practice was to have a 3 month reserves policy. The Finance Sub-Committee received a draft revised Reserves Policy at its meeting on 10/05/16 and were requesting approval from the full board for the proposed Policy. All were in favour so this was approved.

8 c Review of the Constitution

SW explained that the constitution had been due for review in February 2015 but the Board, at that time, due to prevailing events and changes, had agreed to delay this until May.

A discussion was held in relation to changing to a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), incorporation and an associated review of the constitution. Robert Cox and a staff member of the University had recently attended a VAT conference where incorporation was discussed and it was identified that it may not be essential. There was possibly a second, much cheaper option which was also less time consuming. It also had the same outcome of removing liabilities from Trustees. RC and SW would gather some further information on this option from an expert in the field, Chris Dears from Crowe Clark Whitehill, and would present a paper to the Board at its next meeting.

SW explained that it was important to make the right choice and that the second option had only come to light last week. SW asked the Board if they were happy with this to which all agreed.

It was queried whether NUS had a view on moving to CLG. SW responded that there was no specific advice from them and that roughly half of Unions were incorporated and half not. SW stated that it would be a fact finding mission and that due to time constraints it may not be possible to seek independent advice.

9. Officer Reports

- 9.1 HP reported that Celebration Week was a success having had a good new venue and the feedback received was that the students enjoyed it.

- 9.2 At the last Student Council meeting it was agreed that the NUS Referendum would go ahead, the voting period was between 20th and 25th May. The outcome was that quoracy had not been achieved but the majority of those who had voted had voted to remain affiliated. It was noted that the turnout of voters was good considering the number of students that were on campus at the end of the academic year.
- 9.3 HP continued that student staff interviews had recently taken place and the recruitment round had largely been successful, with 90 students applying for around 30 jobs.
- 9.4 The induction for the new Officers was currently being organised too. The handover process for the new Officers was explained to the Board. The current Officers would still be in post until 17th June so there would be a two-week handover period.
- 9.5 WH had recently met with student residents to discuss how the Campus could be developed further to meet the needs of students.
- 9.6 HP gave an update on the Varsity results as well as new societies and sports. He reported that volunteering hours had reached c.30,000 hours and that there had been a drive to try and get more students to log their volunteering hours.
- 9.7 Discussions moved back to the NUS Referendum and it was queried whether the Referendum could be held again at another time. It was confirmed that this would need to be raised with Student Council or students could petition for it.
It was reported that the Referendum debate was very good but there had been a poor turnout. The process had revealed that many students see NUS just as the NUS card and know very little else about what NUS offer and that it was important to feed this back to NUS. It was suggested that the SU needed to make use of NUS whilst still paying for the annual £19.2K subscription. It was noted that NUS card sales had decreased nationally, most likely since the introduction of the three- year card.
- 9.8 DN updated the Board on feedback from students regarding Celebration Week. She felt the venue was very good but the quality of food and service at Stanbrook Abbey were poor but overall students had enjoyed the evening. LA added that in order to offer students a reasonable ticket price they had to select the cheaper menu option with limited choice.
It was also mentioned that in future the Societies Ball could not be a standalone event due to low ticket sales making it financially unviable. It was also pointed out that the Student Choice Awards needed to be improved on as it was important event so changes would need to be made next year.

10 Chief Executive Officer Report

- 10.1 SW updated the Board that Ernst and Young, the University auditors would be conducting an audit of the Union the next day.

- 10.2 Commercial in confidence item
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- 10.4 SW updated the board regarding a recent meeting to discuss the future of the Mens' Football club due to problems experienced throughout the year. HP, SW, Mick Donovan (Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor) and Ross Renton (Pro Vice-Chancellor Students) attended the meeting where various issues were discussed. It was hoped that each team would be provided with a coach but funding had to be sought for this from the University. The club is aware that much needs to change to ensure its smooth running next year. It was also discussed that the club had suggested adopting a one-strike option which is currently a three-strikes one and that there was a need to work out the formalities surrounding this.
It was suggested looking into funding from Sport England and SW would follow this up with the SU Sports Coordinator.
- 10.5 SW reported that she would be working on a strategic plan with the staff and new Officers and thanked Wesley, Lewis and Hemaka for doing a brilliant job in moving the SU back on track. They made a very good Officer team and had received a lot of praise from the University.

11 Executive Committee Minutes

No minutes as no Executive Committee meeting held since last Trustee Board due to examination period

12 Student Council Summary

Student Council had met for their last meeting on 3rd May. Three new societies had been approved; Fencing, Creative Writing and Education Enhancement.

Three motions had been passed:

1. **Supporting Muslim students (and those of other faiths) to ensure campuses are inclusive and accessible for their religious needs** – to ensure the Union actively lobbied on their behalf
2. **To investigate with student services, the possibility of buddy systems for students with mental health problems.** – SW to commence discussions around this with Head of Student Services.
3. **The third motion was in relation to the NUS referendum.**
Student Council had heard arguments for and against remaining affiliated with NUS and had felt it should be up to students to decide whether or not to remain affiliated, ensuring the democratic process was followed.

12 Board of Governors

WH updated the Board that the University Board of Governors met two weeks ago. It was announced that a new Student Village would be developed by the Coppertops pub site on Oldbury Road, after the acquisition of the land there. The SU helped organise a focus group

for the University and its architect asked find out what students wanted in the Student Village. Plans had then been drawn up which incorporated their feedback and ideas. SW reported that the University was keen for the SU to have a role in the Village around supporting and entertaining students.

13 Any Other Business

SW informed the Board that potential meeting dates for the Trustee Board for the next academic year would be sent out as soon as possible as well as requests for Sub - Committee members.

SW extended hers and the officers sincere thanks to AG, NH and DN whose terms of office had come to an end and wished them all the very best for the future. It was agreed that they had all made a brilliant contribution as Trustees, particularly during recent, more challenging times.

Meeting ended.

Summary of Actions

Action	For	To be completed by
Sophie to chase and send minutes of FSC	SW	asap
Contact the Trustees with dates for meetings for next academic and request Subcommittee members	SF	asap

Date of next meeting: To be confirmed