



**WORCESTER**  
STUDENTS' UNION

## Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board**  
**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 – EE G168 @ 6pm**

**Present:**

Jade Haley (Chair) - JH  
Euan Morrison (VP Education) - EM  
Sophie Glenny (VP Student Activities) - SG  
Jill Wilson (External Trustee) – JW  
Margaret Jolley (External Trustee) – MJ  
Elaine Spalding (External Trustee) - ES  
Paul Kellard (Student Trustee) – PK  
Ivan Steblyuk (new Student Trustee) - IS  
Abigail Toon (new Student Trustee) - AT

**In attendance:**

Sophie Williams (SU Chief Executive) - SW  
Samina Fiaz (SU HR & Admin Coordinator, also Minute Secretary) – SF  
Stephen Anderson (Knox Cropper) – SA

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Trustees and Officers to the meeting. No apologies were noted.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Matters arising**

3.1. SW had liaised with NUS regional contact who had confirmed that the changes to the NUS affiliation fee model had been approved at NUS conference as part of a Trustee Report, hence why JH and the Delegates could not recall it being discussed. SW had reported back to NUS that she had been concerned at this approach for such an important issue. SW had also raised concerns with NUS recently regarding the pulling out of Spotify from NUS Extra at the eleventh hour. Many other CEOs had contacted her with messages of support and agreement. NUS Extra will, hopefully, form part of the NUS Strategic Conversation on 28<sup>th</sup> November, which SW wishes to attend and she thanked the Board for moving their next meeting to accommodate this. SW reported that she had had a conversation with Simon Blake, NUS CEO who stated that he wholly sympathised with the issues she had raised.

- 3.2 JH had begun discussions with the Pro Vice Chancellor Students about whether REACH credit could be used to purchase Celebration Week tickets; discussions were ongoing.
- 3.3 SF had emailed the board with Trustee Board meeting dates for the next academic year.

The Board agreed with the Chair's proposal to rearrange the order of the meeting slightly in order that SA could introduce the Year End Accounts first.

#### **4. Declarations of conflict of interest**

None

#### **5. Year End Accounts 2016/17 and Auditors' Management Letter**

- 5.1 JW commenced by stating that the Finance Subcommittee had met earlier in the day and was pleased to report that the Year End accounts were sound, with nothing of substantial concern to report. This was positive news for the SU given that the year had not passed without challenges. The audit report had also been received and again, all was in hand with no significant issues to highlight. A lot of work had been carried out to migrate the finance system to Sage and already the benefits of doing so were being seen, with additional reporting functionality. Income streams had also been discussed (in light of the issues with NUS Extra that may worsen over time) and, whilst there were no major concerns, discussions on this matter would be ongoing at future Finance Subcommittees.
- 5.2 SA discussed the year end Accounts for 2016-17 with the Board [commercial in confidence item]. He pointed the Board, in particular, to the Statement of Financial Activity (SOFA), the Union's reserves position and the pension deficit (and the current, estimated liability relating to SUSS). There were no questions from the Board in relation to the accounts.
- 5.3 The Board approved the Trustees' Report in the accounts.
- 5.4 The Year End Accounts 2016/17 were approved by the Board and it was agreed for JH to sign on behalf of the Board, after which they would be filed with the Charity Commission before the deadline of March 2018.
- SA is thanked for his attendance at the meeting by JH and departs.

**Action:** SW and SA to ensure hard copies of the accounts are signed as per procedure. SW and RC to ensure accounts filed with the Charity Commission before Christmas.

#### **6. Ratification of Bank Mandate Signatories**

- 6.1 The board approved for EM and SG to be updated as bank signatories in place of the previous VP Education and VP Student Activities.

#### **7. Annual Impact Report 2016/17**

- 7.1 SW reported that although not completely finished, the final draft of the impact report had been sent to the Trustee Board. The Board approved the impact report. It had been suggested by the PVC (Students) that, in addition to the usual mailing list, the impact report could also be emailed to all students one week before the University survey period commences in January. ES queried whether the report would be sent to university Governors and Fellows. SW confirmed

that Governors were on the circulation list but Fellowes were not currently but SW would look into this. ES stated that there were approximately 30 Arts and Culture Fellows and their contact details could be obtained from the Universities Director of Arts & Culture.

**Action – SW to contact Director of Arts & Culture to obtain contact details.**

JH thanked SW for her hard work in recent months in preparing the impact report, with the help of the student graphic designers.

## **8. Appointment of Deputy Returning Officer and Returning Officer (elections).**

- 8.1 SW stated that the Trustee Board was responsible for approving a Deputy Returning Officer and Returning Officer annually, to oversee the SU's Elections. The current Deputy Returning Officer, Val Yates (Director of Inclusivity) had agreed to continue as DRO again this year. The Returning Officer is NUS. JW queried whether the SU pay for NUS and SW confirmed that they did not. The Board approved the appointments.

## **9. Appointment of Supervising Trustee for 2017/18**

- 9.1 One member of the board, usually an External trustee, is required to act as a Supervising Trustee. JW has held the position for the past two years and would now like to relinquish the responsibility, if possible. SW and JW explained the role to the board on the role of Supervising Trustee and what it had entailed over the last couple of years, in line with the current bye laws. The upcoming Governance review will address the role of the Supervising Trustee in order to reduce its responsibility as it is currently agreed to be disproportionate in student disciplinary matters. This had meant, at times, a considerable commitment for JW.
- 9.2 SW stated that, as a result, she had had conversations with the University to seek their support in easing the burden from the SU when it came to student disciplinary matters and discussions over when a student was considered to be part of a team (to be addressed by the SU) or just an individual behaving badly (and, therefore, coming under the University's regulations). The University had been very forthcoming in helping with this, for which SW was grateful, which had meant a lot less reliance on the Supervising Trustee in recent months.
- 9.3 MJ was interested in stepping into the role but SW questioned whether that this could result in a conflict of interest due to MJ's role on the HR Subcommittee and her guidance to SW on HR matters at the SU.
- 9.4 ES nominated herself with some concern over the level of commitment required and the timeliness of the governance review to amend the role. JW offered to deputise if ES was not available and to take ES through the role. The board approved ES as Supervising Trustee.

**Action: JW and ES to liaise outside of the meeting on the role of Supervising Trustee**

## **10. Chief Executive Officer Report**

- 10.1 Both HR and Finance Subcommittees have met and had updates earlier today. The Finance Subcommittee will meet again once the September and October accounts had been finalised.
- 10.2 Welcome Week this year had been very pleasing with many university staff commenting that it was the best yet. Bar sales had increased and there were a range of activities on offer for students.
- 10.3 In terms of staffing, the Deputy Bar and Events Manager had settled in very well and was demonstrating his previous experience from the hospitality sector. The student staff were getting on very well with him and he appeared to be building good relationships with them. This was particularly pleasing in light of the previous difficulties with this post. SW also gave an update on the other new members of staff.
- 10.4 NUS card sales were down compared to last year and the SU were very dissatisfied with NUS, as previously mentioned. It was expected that the SU would struggle to meet the target for card sales this year but that the new Marketing Co-ordinator was pulling together an action plan, similar to that of last year, to boost sales.
- 10.5 This year Sports Clubs and Societies had introduced an 'Interest list' so that students could 'try before they buy'. This had worked well, giving sports clubs and societies more of an incentive to show students what they offered and allowing students to make a more informed decisions about memberships. This would also reduce the amount of refunds issued to students who changed their mind soon after purchasing memberships. It was noted that the Vice Chancellor and the two Deputy Vice Chancellors had mentioned to JH that they were really pleased with this new process.
- 10.6 SW was disappointed by the lack of progress on the sport strategy, which potentially requires external facilitation. No further meetings of the Sports Board had been arranged yet. SG recently raised her concerns for Sport in the SU/UW meeting in which David Green was present.
- 10.7 A lot of work had been done on improving the culture within sports clubs which had been fruitful with only a couple of issues reported since the start of the semester.
- 10.8 Training was being arranged for the Inclusivity reps to ensure they have support to carry out their roles effectively.
- 10.9 The Autumn Elections were upcoming with nominations now open.
- 10.10 The Marketing and Communications team were doing very well and will be working on a project to update the website soon. SW suggested that the new Marketing and Communications Coordinator could do a short presentation to the board at the next meeting and all agreed that this would be a good idea. The team of graphic designers were also working hard and seemed very talented.  
**Action – SW to invite MCC to the next meeting**
- 10.11 SW was working towards her objectives to ensure the SU were moving forwards with the Strategic plan. The SU now had a full staff team and were working well. JW queried the plans for Varsity next year. SW updated the group on her struggles to arrange a meeting with Gloucestershire SU but stated she would continue to chase to move forward.

**Action – SW & SG to meet with Gloucester SU re Varsity as soon as possible.**

### **11. Board Sub-committees**

- 11.1 The Finance Sub-committee had met earlier in the day and JW briefly updated the board on the issues surrounding the SUSS pension.
- 11.2 EM updated the Board on the HR Subcommittee which had met earlier that day and its discussions, which included an update on new staff, recruitment and the Staff Consultative Forum.
- 11.3 \*Commercial in confidence\* item with discussions led by JH.

### **12. Officers' Report**

- 12.1 SG reported that the refurbishment of the Hangar had gone smoothly and the space was looking much more inviting with positive comments received from many University staff.
- 12.2 Prior to Welcome Week, for the first time, the SU, with the support of University Accommodation and the Residential Ambassadors, hosted several day time and evening events (including a Welcome Fair) for the 'Early Starters' – nurses, teachers, and international students. These were a lot of fun and really seemed to help the students feel welcome and to settle in with lots of them attending. Feedback from course leaders has been extremely positive.
- 12.3 The SU hosted its' first conference style Sports and Societies Committee training. 249 committee members attended a variety of role-specific and optional sessions to enhance their skills and equip them for their roles as committee members. Two external speakers delivered sessions too and feedback on the two-day training would be sought from students.
- 12.4 Just less than 60 students attended the SU Crew training and seemed an engaged group.
- 12.5 The Employability Fair as part of Welcome Week had been a very successful event where the SU had their own stall promoting student staff vacancies.
- 12.6 During Welcome Week more than 2900 students attended the Sports and Societies Fair and over 3000 attended the Welcome fair. Feedback on Welcome Week had been very positive with everyone agreeing the location of the main Fair in the Sports Centre was a huge improvement, which had much more space. A total of 3000 water bottles had been handed out to students to encourage rehydration.
- 12.7 A number of social events ran during the course of Welcome Week including a Welcome BBQ, treasure hunt, pool tournament, an Open Mic Night, a Bavarian Night, and a cocktail/mocktail night and all were well received by students.
- 12.8 Prior to Welcome Week, the SU also held a Staff Open Day for university staff to come and speak to SU staff about the role of the SU. Each department had their own stall allowing visitors to check in at each stall and gain information. 60 staff attended in total and it was agreed that the event would be held annually to help promote the services of the SU. SW commended the Officers who had organised the event entirely on their own and had developed a 'Who's Who in the SU' brochure for staff to take away. All staff who signed in at the event will be added to a mailing list and will be kept informed of SU events, which should help with

student engagement with the SU through word of mouth and lecturers sharing the information with students.

- 12.9 JH had recently focussed attention on employability and had created an employability booklet for students to help them with job applications. The booklet was available to students at the recent Employability fair and had gone down really well, with applications for the outstanding bar jobs seeming to be of a higher quality. A second issue of the booklet is in progress and will focus on interviews.
- 12.10 EM had been working on raising awareness of the change in name of StAR's (Student Academic Reps) to Course Reps, running some SU Out and About's to support the campaign. EM will, also, be hosting a brand new Course Rep conference in the New Year.
- 12.11 SG has focussed on one of her objectives, which was to increase the number of sports and societies on offer at the SU. The 'New Year New Soc' campaign was launched inviting students to suggest new sports and societies. As a result of this, a Mature Students Society had already formed with four members so far. The society had formed a constitution, had met with and discussed plans with the Student Engagement Coordinator. Many other societies had been suggested and SG is now linking students to help them form new groups. SG was congratulated on this novel approach.

### **13. Executive Committee Summary**

- 13.1 The Executive Committee had not formed yet. Nominations for the Part Time Officer positions were now open and eight students had booked information sessions with SU staff. JH commented that following the lack of engagement during the Bye Elections last year, work had been done to increase engagement and to attract better quality part time officers, especially on social media and by introducing the democratic nature of the SU (and Dennis the Democratic Duck!) right from Welcome Week.

### **14. Student Council Summary**

- 14.1 The Autumn Elections were currently open so Student Council had not formed yet. There will be an update at the next meeting.

### **15. Board of Governors Summary**

- 15.1 JH and EM updated the board on the main items of discussion at the Board of Governors meeting [Commercial in confidence item]. The Officers have been invited to give a one-hour presentation on the SU strategic plan at the next Board of Governors Away Day (9<sup>th</sup> October). JH reported that the SU opinion is highly valued, which is positive news for the relationship between the SU and the University. SW congratulated JH who has been asked by the Vice Chancellor to represent the University at a conference in Kuala Lumpur in December on student representation and leaders. This is a significant step and a huge honour for JH.

## 16. Any Other Business

ES queried the trend in an increase in advice appointments during the New Year. JH explained that there were an increase in student issues at that time of the year, following the Christmas break and the exam period in January. It was also noted that the University and the SU's Academic and Welfare Advisor had been promoting the Advice Service hence the increase in demand.

Meeting ended.

### Summary of Actions:

Action	For	To be completed by
SW and SA to ensure hard copies of the accounts are signed as per procedure.	SA/SW	asap
SW and RC to ensure accounts filed with the Charity Commission before Christmas.	SW	December 2017
JW and ES to liaise outside of the meeting on the role of Supervising Trustee	JW/ES	Next meeting
SW to contact Director of Arts & Culture to obtain contact details for University Fellowes to add to impact report circulation list.	SW	ASAP
SW to invite the Marketing & Communications Coordinator to the next board meeting for a short presentation	SW	ASAP
Contact Gloucester SU re Varsity	SW & SG	ASAP

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 6pm.**