



## Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – EE G024 @ 6pm**

**Present:**

James Gunther (VP Education & **Chair**) - JG  
Hemaka Pathirana (VP Student Activities) - HP  
Jill Wilson (External Trustee) – JW  
Elaine Spalding (External Trustee) – ES  
Margaret Jolley (External Trustee) - MJ  
Felicity Wolfenden (Student Trustee) – FW  
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

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Trustees and Officers to the meeting. Apologies were noted for Jade Haley (President) and Paul Kellard (Student Trustee).

**2. Approval of new Student Trustees**

The board approved the appointment of two new Student Trustees – Abigail Toon and Ivan Steblyuk.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

ES queried progress on the continuing contractual issues in relation to the photocopier. SW confirmed that investigations were ongoing and that University Finance and possibly University Counsel, are supporting the SU in negotiations to end the contract/s. SW confirmed that the Finance Sub Committee of the Board were being kept informed by Robert Cox and will be involved in the decision-making around any changes in contract/s.

**4. Matters arising**

The website footnotes had been updated.

**5. Declarations of conflict of interest**

None

## 6. Chief Executive Officer Report

- 6.1 SW had been liaising with the PVC Students regarding the budget for the block grant and will be submitting the budget on 29<sup>th</sup> March. The SU had been advised not to request more than £500k as there are likely to be cuts across UW departments due to uncertainty around student recruitment. The SU were informed that it was very unlikely that there would be an increase on last year's grant.
- 6.2 Two new roles were identified to support the existing staff team at the SU; a Representation Assistant and a Sports Assistant. However, if the SU is not offered the full £500k block grant then only one role could be recruited which seemed most likely to be the Sports post at this stage.
- 6.3 The block grant was discussed further, including whether a statement of fund expenditure should be submitted in support of the budget and whether the same block grant would be financially viable in the coming year. SW stated that it will be a tougher year given the annual salary increments and cost of living rise in August. It was discussed whether it would be pertinent to submit a higher block grant request than the £500k with justified reasons for doing so. SW confirmed that the budget would be sent to the Board for approval prior to submission.
- 6.4 It was noted that UW had announced the block grant in August last year, when the financial year had already commenced hence hindering planning for the forthcoming academic year. It was hoped that that would not be the case this year.
- 6.5 A meeting would be held with UW, most likely in June once information had been received from Ross Trustees (Trustees of the SUSS pension scheme), to discuss whether the University would be willing to pay another up-front bulk payment into the SUSS pension scheme, as they had in 2014.
- 6.6 With regards to the SU building, redecoration of the Pear Tree would commence on 10<sup>th</sup> April, with new furniture also being discussed. This would be at the University's expense, which is much appreciated.
- 6.7 Pear Tree sales had started to pick up and the picture for Semester 2 was more positive. [Commercial in confidence item]. There had been an increase in external bookings as well as an increase in bookings from clubs and societies.
- 6.8 NUS card sales continued and commission is higher than at this time last year, due to the sales of 3 year cards (volume of card sales remains lower).
- 6.9 There had been no developments on the UW Sports Strategy and the SU was waiting for the Sports Board to re-convene.
- 6.10 The Marketing department had produced some excellent marketing work recently and UW had been very impressed with SU marketing materials for the elections.
- 6.11 The SU strategic plan had been reviewed by all staff in February, with priorities in place leading up to the end of the academic year. The SU had a busy few weeks ahead with the main elections and the annual Varsity event.

## **7. Review of Financial Procedures**

SW informed the Board that the Finance Subcommittee had been involved in reviewing and accepting some updated Finance procedures. The Board approved the updated procedures and gave positive feedback on these.

## **8. Management Accounts January 2017**

Points of note in the accounts were discussed. [Commercial in confidence item]. JW updated the new Student Trustees on elements around the current financial situation, including the close monitoring of the Bar, with SW reporting on the national trend of declining student spending at Bars. IS stated there were many contributing factors to this trend but that the Pear Tree desperately needed some cosmetic attention to make it a more welcoming space.

The accounts were approved by the Board.

## **9. Updated Terms of Reference (ToR)**

The terms of reference were approved by the Board and would be reviewed in May 2018. FW would be removed from the ToR's in May 2017 at the end of her studies and hence the end of her term with the Board.

**Action: SF to ensure ToR were updated at the end of FW's term of office.**

## **10. Annual Update on external speakers**

The report had been completed by the new Student Engagement Coordinator, for the information of the Board.

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

Two Finance subcommittees had been held since the last Trustee Board and that the committee were happy activity within SU Finance matters. It was brought to the Board's attention that a replacement student trustee would be required for the Finance subcommittee following the departure of a student trustee earlier in the year. AT was deemed suitable for the role due to her background in Finance and undertaking a Finance course at UW. AT was happy to take on this role.

JG updated the Board on the HR Subcommittee which had met earlier that day and its discussions, which included student staff recruitment, staff probationary reviews, the new Staff Consultative Forum and the potential to apply for Investors in People accreditation.

## **12. Officers' Reports**

- 12.1 HP informed the Board, that ahead of Varsity, both Gloucester University and UW would be signing a contract to commit to the 'Take a Stand' campaign and that SW had written the pledge for this.
- 12.2 Varsity planning was in full swing and the sporting fixtures had now been finalised.
- 12.3 The Higher Education Authority (HEA) would be running a project on student retention to investigate why students drop out of higher education in their first and second year, in particular males on HND courses. The HEA would be visiting

UW tomorrow and HND students have been invited to attend too. Some of the causes of drop-out at UoW (which were much higher on some courses than others) were discussed as well as initiatives to reduce the numbers. FW also mentioned that some students had questioned the purpose of their degree course and its usefulness in the job/career path they take. It was also noted that the number of eighteen year olds would drop in the coming years which would also impact student recruitment.

**Action: JG to check UW student drop-out figure.**

- 12.4 Commuting students made up a significant number of the student population on City Campus so discussions were ongoing by a new Campus Life Group on how facilities could be improved for them such as providing locker rooms and a common room. The Officers hoped that permission would be granted by UW to use the basement at City Campus for this purpose.
- 12.5 Celebration week this year would consist of two big events instead of the four held in recent years. These would be the Colours Ball (Sports Awards) and the Union Awards (Societies, volunteering and Student Choice awards).
- 12.6 Elections voting opened today with Question Time also being held over the lunch hour today. The Student Engagement Manager would be monitoring the voters carefully in order to produce better reports/statistics on the voting population which would feed into future elections campaigns.
- 12.7 HP showed the 'Take a Stand' video ahead of Varsity to raise awareness of anti-social behaviour and for the Board to view and was commended for his work on this.
- 12.8 The first edition of the 'Worc Hard Play Hard' magazine had been well received with work on the second edition now under way.

### **13. Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee had not met since the last Trustee Board.

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

- 14.1 JG informed the Board that Student Council had approved a motion for 'Student Led Services', relating to student services such as Nightline and RAG.
- 14.2 Student Council had also approved a motion to change the structure of Raise and Give (RAG) to be delivered by an appointed committee, as opposed to an elected officer, as the work was largely operational as opposed to representative. A Chair would be appointed and members would have the opportunity for training over the summer ahead of the start of the new academic year, so that fundraising activity could start immediately in the new term. Students would be able to approach the committee directly with fundraising queries/ideas.
- 14.3 Student Council had agreed to lobby the University for a 'Careers for the whole of our student body' service to help raise awareness of job opportunities specifically for disabled students. This would also include how to train staff in support mechanisms for disabled applicants.

## 15. Board of Governors Summary

The Board of Governors attended a tour and presentation at the SU in February. The visit was a success, and governors seemed pleased with the way the SU was run and offered advice on the strategic development of the SU.

At the meeting following the visit, the agenda mainly focussed on inclusivity, the implications of Brexit and the UW strategic plan. A discussion had also been held on the national Wheelchair Basketball Base having moved to Sheffield University. At the meeting the Officers had reported on the recent Elections campaign.

## 16. Any Other Business

16.1 It was noted that Paul Kellard, Student Trustee, had now missed two consecutive Trustee Board meetings.

**Action: SF to contact Paul to find out if the TB meeting time was still suitable for him.**

16.2 SW would meet with the new student trustees prior to the next TB meeting for an overview of the SU.

SW would also be delivering charity commission training before the next TB.

**Action: SF to arrange the training dates for the above**

16.3 SW announced that she is now a member of the Board of Directors for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body which reviews student complaints.

16.5 SW handed out a paper regarding the potential refurbishing of the SU for the information of the Board.

Meeting ended.

## Summary of Actions:

Action	For	To be completed by
Update Terms of Reference for the Board	SF	At the end of FW's term of office
Check UW student drop-out figure	JG	Next meeting
Contact Paul Kellard to check if he is still able to commit to the meeting time for TB	SF	Asap
Book meeting for SW with new trustees and charity commission training.	SF	Prior to next meeting

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 18:00 start**