

## Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board**  
**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – Via Zoom, 18:00**

**Present:**

Megan Price (Chair and President) – MP  
Harry South (VP Education) – HS  
Tish Manning (VP Student Activities) - TM  
Margaret Jolley (Lay Trustee) – MJ  
Rebekah Williams (Lay Trustee) – RW  
Deborah Andrews (Student Trustee) – DA  
Andrew Humphry (Student Trustee) – AH  
Isobel Lines (Student Trustee) - IL

**In attendance:**

Sophie Williams (SU Chief Executive) - SW  
Samina Fiaz (SU HR & Admin Coordinator, also Minute Secretary) – SF  
Stephen Anderson (Knox Cropper) – SA, for item 7  
Christian James (Knox Cropper) – CJ, for item 7

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

Apologies received for Melanie Brittain (Lay Trustee).

**2. Appointment of new trustees**

The appointment of Andrew Humphry is approved.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting in August 2020 were also approved.

**4. Matters arising**

All actions had been completed except DA had not been able to forward a copy of the school newsletter to the Officers as her children had moved school. All actions from the extraordinary meeting had also been completed. Regarding the volunteering hours logging system, TM had been liaising with MSL on how to improve this and will also be arranging 'volunteering hours logging days' for students where they can visit SU staff who will log hours on their behalf.

**5. Declarations or conflicts of interest/ Register of declarations of interest**

None declared.

SF had emailed both the related party declaration and declaration of conflicts of interest to all trustees and requested the completed forms to be returned as soon as possible.

*Item 8 is now discussed before moving onto the other agenda items, so that the Auditors, SA and CJ, could leave the meeting after this item. See notes below, under item 8. SA and CJ leave the meeting after item 8.*

## **6. Chief Executive Officer Report**

SW updated the board on key SU activities as follows:

- 6.1 After a recent meeting with IT, it has been agreed that the SU would now be part of the University IT rolling programme which essentially means that the SU would be treated as a university department for their IT requirements. This includes the supply and maintenance of all computer hardware and software as well the supply of a University managed photocopier. All new staff would also receive a new PC. This was excellent news for the Union and SW reported that the IT department have been very helpful in coming to the arrangement.
- 6.2 SW continued to attend weekly University reoccupation meetings, along with key university staff.
- 6.3 SW's new objectives had been approved and include reoccupation of campus, review of lockdown and contingency plans for potential future waves of the virus, implementation of the new governance structure, developing volunteering, developing the equality, diversity and inclusion work of the Union, reviewing the staff salary structure for affordability, succession planning with the senior management team, and preparing a for a new 5 year strategic plan.
- 6.4 With regards to the Hangar, there is now a consistent level of students visiting the Hangar each day. Managing student behaviour has been a little challenging as student are keen to enjoy themselves but the core and student staff have been consistently giving the same messages and doing their very best to marshal behaviour appropriately. The SU are keen to work in partnership with the University who are happy that students are visiting the Hangar rather than other venues, in terms of their safety in line with Covid guidelines. Saturday bookings are going ahead and are going very well with Saturdays now being one of the Hangar's busiest nights, which is a notable change from previous years. This is caused by the fact that many students are not going home at weekends and because a limited amount of bookings are available each evening so students are also booking at the weekend. Anecdotally, students have also said that they feel safe and comfortable in The Hangar, as compared to other venues, which is positive. The Hangar has also received a visit from the local Licensing Officer who was happy with the processes in place. Tramps have been very responsible in their handling of Covid guidelines and have agreed that the SU will receive £1 from each ticket sale. Weekly updates on ticket sales are being received and this income, whilst not significant, is welcome. Good communication has been maintained with Tramps management and University Security.
- 6.5 Advice and Support has been busy with just under 40 cases since the start of term which is more than during the same period last year. The Academic and Welfare Advisor is due to go on jury service in November and so the Advice Service will be covered by the Student Engagement Manager in her absence.

- 6.6 SU staff have been working really hard with the University to getting students back to playing team and recreational sport. The gym is still not open but is due to asap. The SU has been encouraging the University to facilitate recreational sport, despite resourcing difficulties as it is very important to try and keep as many students active as possible during these times.
- 6.7 With regards to the sport strategy, there were no further update on this. A further meeting with the Director of Sports Partnerships at the University had not yet been arranged.
- 6.8 TM had been working with the Student Engagement Coordinator to develop the volunteering arm of the SU, to make it more appealing to students. The SU is due to meet with Accommodation and Student Services departments to try and establish a volunteering scheme whereby students can help other students who are self-isolating.
- 6.9 Recruitment to the new Student Networks is going very well with member numbers in most networks far exceeding expectations, with the LGBTQ+ and BAME networks doing particularly well.
- 6.10 The Commuter lunch chats were not well utilised, unfortunately, with only a few students registering but then not attending at the scheduled times. This was real disappointing as the SU had been hopeful that, with lots of activity moving on-line, these sessions would have been popular and their promotion had seemed very good. The university experience currently for commuter students appears to be largely transactional but it was hoped that things would change in the future, when campus resumed more activities. Feedback from other SU's regarding commuter students was similar.
- 6.11 The board thanked SW and the SU staff for providing very detailed reports despite staff workloads, as they are appreciated.
- 6.12 The board discussed the possibility of staff involvement on the board as it was felt that the board do not know the staff team and vice versa. There had been presentations from one or two staff in the past. It was agreed that the Student Engagement Team could present on key areas of work they are focussing on this year in the January board meeting.  
**Action:** SW and Officers to liaise with the SE team for a presentation at the January Board meeting.

## **7. Terms of reference for the Board**

- 7.1 The Board approved the terms of reference.

## **8. Draft Year End Accounts 2019-20 and Auditors' Management Letter**

- 8.1 SA updated the Board on key points from the year end accounts and provided further information in relation to the restricted and unrestricted funds. The SU accounts were healthy despite the challenges faced as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and ensuing lockdown. An update was provided on income from the Bar and Clubs and Societies, as well as salaries and the SUSS pension deficit. It was confirmed that, overall, both the restricted and unrestricted funds were very healthy.  
[COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE]

- 8.2 The recent audit had run smoothly with the Auditors reporting sound accounting policies and a clean audit, with no significant weaknesses in processes.
- 8.3 One minor change and a small addition were identified as being needed in the accounts, which would be completed as soon as possible, after which MP would sign them on behalf of the Board, as would the auditors. The accounts would, also, be presented to the University's Audit and Risk Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Governors) in early November.
- 8.4 The board formally approved the accounts subject to the minor changes being made.

*SA and CJ are thanked for attending and updating the Board and then leave the meeting.*

## **9. Amendments to Bye Laws**

- 9.1 SW outlined some changes to the Bye Laws (suggested at Executive committee) which were approved by the board.

## **10. Strategic Plan**

SW updated the board on key areas of the strategic plan, explaining the broad aims of each core goal, including progress to date and plans for the forthcoming year.

RW informed the board about potential funding which is available via Sport England to support disability and inclusivity in sport.

**Action:** RW to research the initiative further and feed back to SW/TM.

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

MP stated that the Trustee Board was responsible for approving a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) and Returning Officer (RO) annually, to oversee the SU's Elections. MP briefly explained the role of each and confirmed that Val Yates (Director of Inclusivity at the University) had agreed to continue as DRO again this year. The RO is NUS.

The Board approved these appointments.

## **12. Appointment of Lead Trustee for 2020/21**

MP explained the role of Lead Trustee. RW was the lead trustee last year and was happy to continue in the role for another year. The board approved the appointment.

The board also discussed setting up a WhatsApp group for all trustees to act as a support network and for sharing news, as this could be particularly useful for new trustees when they're new in their roles.

**Action:** SW and MP to liaise to decide how to move this forward

## **13. Board Sub-committees**

- 13.1 HS updated the board on key discussions from the HR subcommittee which included:
- Review of lockdown forms completed by staff and outcomes and areas of improvement from those.

- Probationary progress for staff, including how new staff had settled into their roles (including during Welcome Week) as well as the student staff induction.
- Updates from the midlands HR network group meeting.
- [COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE] Annual cost of living rise. A recommendation was given to the full Board about this, following discussions at the Sub Committee. The decision was, subsequently, for the Board, to suspend any cost of living rise at this point due to very real financial pressures and uncertainty and that the position would be reviewed at the final trustee board meeting of the year with the potential for discretionary awards being made then, if appropriate. A letter from the board would be sent to staff explaining the rationale for the decision.

13.2 The Finance subcommittee was due to convene on 16th October.

#### **14. Officers' report**

HS, MP and TM updated the board on a range of recent SU activities, as follows:

- The Officers had attended various virtual conferences over the summer.
- Induction training for school reps and clubs and societies largely took place online but saw very good engagement.
- Welcome Weekend went extremely well and was enjoyed by all, with sports and societies taking it in turn to attend across both days to ensure social distancing was adhered to. The atmosphere was superb with many sports and societies requesting that future welcome weekends take a similar format.
- A range of virtual events took place to support students such as helping international students who were in quarantine. Other events included online disco binglow, virtual fancy a cuppa, online karaoke, and quizzes for sports and societies. All events were well received and appreciated by those students who attended.
- A sports and societies showcase took place as well as a Networks launch day and a vintage clothes fair outside the SU.
- This year's RAG charity is Smile for Joel and the Officers are planning to take part in Sober October to raise funds for this and also intend on holding a virtual RAG week this semester.
- Work for academic representation had gone well with training for many School Reps having taken place. The community of school reps was already having a positive impact and they were being very active in their roles.
- Upcoming events include TeamWorc Action Day, Battle of the Sports, which will include a Lakeside Day of activities.
- Supporting societies to run online events had been more challenging but TM and the Student Engagement Coordinator had been working hard to help them with this and would continue to do this to try and improve engagement.
- Black History Month promotion was under way with resource and reading lists being advertised as well as a student led exhibition called 'A walk through black history' and an evening showcase of different cultural dress. The African

Caribbean Society had done an amazing job in organising the events, which saw engagement from lots of other societies and clubs, which was a joy to see. The exhibition was, also, attended by the Mayor of Worcester and her husband and the Senior PVC (Students).

- Engagement in launching the Networks had been pleasing to date and an ongoing, important area of work for the SU to widen its representation.
- Work to set up the charity shop had commenced in summer but not enough items had been identified to make the shop viable at present so it is envisaged that launch of the project would be postponed until January and a new intake of students.
- SW added that SU staff will be taking it in turns to work from City Campus to ensure that there continues to be an SU presence there.

#### **15. Executive Committee summary**

Two formal and one extraordinary Executive Committee meetings had taken place. Key discussions included the role of committee in light of the governance review, criteria for approving or disapproving clubs and societies, associate membership fees, approving the Dr Who society and approving a rainbow crossing on campus as an idea to be progressed, as it had received over 25 votes on the Ideas Forum. It was felt that the new structure of the committee was working well and that it could be more agile and responsive in this format.

#### **16. Student Council Summary**

Student Council had not convened yet this semester but is due to take place later in the month.

#### **17. Board of Governors summary**

An update was given on discussions at the last Board of Governors meeting. [Commercial in confidence]. The SU report and Officers' presentation had been well received by governors.

#### **18. Any Other Business**

None

**Date of next meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

#### **Summary of Actions:**

Action	For	To be completed by
Set up a new WhatsApp group for trustees.	SW & MP	Asap

To research potential funding which is available via Sport England to support disability and inclusivity in sport.	RW	Next board meeting
SW and Officers to liaise with the Student Engagement Team to present on key areas of work they are focussing on in the January board meeting.	SW, MP, HS and TM	Asap

DRAFT