

Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board
Tuesday 22nd January 2019 – EE G020 @ 6pm**

Present:

Euan Morrison (VP Education) – EM
Lucy Conn (Chair) - LC
Melanie Brittain (External Trustee) - MB
Harrison Jarrett (VP Student Activities) - HJ
Elaine Spalding (External Trustee) – ES
Margaret Jolley (External Trustee) – MJ
Robert Hampton (Student Trustee) – RH
Abigail Toon (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

Apologies were noted for Harrison Jarrett (VP Student Activities) - HJ.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters arising

SW had conducted the benchmarking on SU block grants nationally and gave some information on the findings. It was established that WSU was not in the top quartile of SU's with regards to spend per student.

4. Declarations or conflicts of interest/ Register of declarations of interest

None.

5. Chief Executive Officer Report

- 5.1 SW asked the board for questions in relation to the CEO report. MB asked whether the University would reduce the SU block grant due to the fall in student numbers recruited. SW explained that student numbers were forecast to fall again for a second academic year but after that it was likely they would start to go up again. This is due in part to a trough in student numbers reaching university age. SW confirmed that the numbers of nursing and teaching students had increased and sports and business students had fallen. The Board agreed that it is important for the SU to be able to demonstrate how it adjusts/ensures that services meet the needs of a changing demography of students.

6. Monthly Management Accounts – November and December 2018

- 6.1 No areas for concern with the accounts.

- 6.2 SW gave a brief update on Bar sales, staff salaries, Welcome week revenue and also commended the Sport Administrator for significantly reducing sport transport costs.
- 6.3 The Board approved the accounts.

7. Risk Register

- 7.1 Reference to NUS Media Local has been removed from the risk register as it is no longer in operation.
- 7.2 One item had been inserted under the Financial Risks as a 'medium' risk. [Commercial in confidence]
- 7.3 The Board approved the revised risk register and agreed that it would be reviewed again at the board meeting in November 2019.

8. SU Lease

- 8.1 The board had a brief discussion regarding the new lease and how it compared to the previous licence agreement. The new lease had been approved in principal by the Vice Chancellors Executive Board.
- 8.2 The Board approved the new lease.

9. Strategic Plan

- 9.1 The strategic plan was reviewed at a recent All staff meeting. A lot of progress had been made in some areas and areas of little or no progress were discussed amongst the staff group to ensure staff move forwards with these. Most of these were down to timing, to circumstances beyond the SU's control e.g. dependant on University developments, or to altered priorities.
- 9.2 Attempts to engage with the residential life team had not been very successful so this task was no longer a priority for the year.
- 9.3 The university prospectus now includes a whole page on the SU, not just a paragraph.
- 9.4 Executive Committee was still not functioning appropriately so would be reviewed under the next governance review.
- 9.5 Meetings with university staff regarding development of the sport strategy were ongoing. Development of recreational sports was ongoing with some space and facilities issues. However, swimming lessons and boxercise classes had commenced.
- 9.6 An employability fair would be organised by the SU for May. EM updated the board on some of the work the university careers department were doing around employability. ES suggested contacting Louise Hewett, of Hewett Recruitment, who is also a University fellow, as she may be able to assist/advise on employability matters.
Action: EM to contact Louise Hewett.
- 9.7 Work would start on Green Impact this semester in line with the submission deadline.
- 9.8 Areas of the strategic plan that the SU is doing well on included improving our online presence. TeamWorc TV had been well received and the range of ways students were interacting with us had increased. The SU was gathering

information from students from various services and areas to feedback to Officers in a more intelligent manner, ideally to help inform campaigning activities. The Advice service had seen an increase in cases (close to 50% more on last academic year) and work on welfare and RAG was going very well. Communication with the university community had improved with SU events being promoted weekly via the University Communications email.

9.9 The board approved progress on the strategic plan.

10. Board Sub-committees

10.1 The Finance Subcommittee had not met since the last Board meeting.

10.2 EM gave an update from the HR and Remunerations Sub-committee. Discussions included recommendations from the Ernst and Young audit and the results of the organisation culture questionnaire.

11. Officers' Report

11.1 EM updated the board on recent and upcoming activities:

- Refreshers week had gone very well with 15 stalls at the Refreshers fair. The housing fair had been well received too as well as evening events in the Hangar.
- Upcoming events included Change Week and the Course Rep Conference.
- A good number of responses had been received to the Course Rep survey which was rolled out at the end of semester 1. The feedback will be used to work on improvements.
- The People's vote campaign was continuing with various events to promote this.
- A meeting had been held with the head of Student Services to discuss timings for the launch of the mental health survey which would likely take place in March or April.
- The 'safety in numbers' campaign as planned and would be discussed with local taxi firms to encourage students to stay in groups when out at night, particularly when returning home. The potential for fixed pricing would also be discussed as part of this.
- Plans in conjunction with the university to improve external signage for the SU were making good progress. New signs for the SU would ensure more students know where to find the SU.
- HJ was working on episode 10 of TeamWorc TV which is running on YouTube via Twitter and Facebook. HJ had made a list of clubs and societies to meet with to record further episodes of TeamWorc TV. Attendance at TeamWorc meetings had been very good and feedback was being taken on board.
- Societies week was held before Christmas to make societies feel welcomed and included in SU activities.
- Plans to organise Varsity were ongoing with the pledge signing to take place next month.
- RAG was doing tremendously well with nearly £14K raised to date. Events such as RAGVENT and Festive Fortnight really boosted the

fundraising and volunteer numbers. It was noted that micro-volunteering seemed to be a very good way of engaging students in a way that was suitable to their busy lifestyles with an immediate impact.

- SW added that the Officers had been working very hard and excelling in many areas. SW said she could not recall a time when an Officer team had been busier, with such comprehensive progress against their objectives. She felt they could be very proud of themselves.

12. Executive Committee minutes

Executive Committee had not convened again due to member availability issues. The committee is due to meet next week with two Part Time officers and three full time officers currently confirmed as attending.

13. Student Council Summary

EM updated the Board on key discussions from the last Student Council meeting, including thoughts on whether the University should develop a 'Fit to Sit' policy.

14. Board of Governors summary

An update was given on the last Board of Governors meeting which focussed largely on the University Strategic Plan and progress against capital developments. [Commercial in Confidence].

15. Any Other Business

SW updated the Board on the latest information in relation to the future of NUS and its proposals for reform. A letter from the current leadership team of NUS was read to the Board. SW and the SU Finance Manager had had a meeting via Skype with Peter Robertson (NUS Acting Chief Executive) to discuss matters further. In order to reduce their costs, NUS had proposed the following:

- Staff numbers would be reduced to 104 from 216.
- NUS offices would be relocated to a site with lower rental costs.
- There would be a possibility to purchase a building to rent to increase income.
- The number of NUS conferences could be reduced and combined.
- Elections would not necessarily need to be held in a physical location but moved on-line.
- There was no consensus on staff roles or how the affiliation fee was structured.
- SUs had the opportunity to comment on the NUS White Paper, which contained the options for reform by early February and they would then be voted on at National Conference.
- The NUS Company Law Meeting would then convene and the outcome of that meeting would depend very much on the voting at National Conference, if the proposals for reform are rejected and, if so, by how much. The matter is complicated further by the fact that, technically the same organisations and representatives i.e. elected officers can attend both and so legal advice is being sought around that.
- Discussions on the future of Totum cards and if they would be 'sold' were ongoing.

Meeting ended.

Summary of Actions:

Action	For	To be completed by
EM to contact Louise Hewett	EM	Next board meeting

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 19th March 2019 - 18:00, EEG020

DRAFT