

Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board
Tuesday 26th November 2019 – EE 1100, 18:00**

Present:

Megan Price (VP Education) – MP
Harry Lonsdale (Chair and President) – HL
Michael Harris (VP Student Activities) - MH
Margaret Jolley (External Trustee) – MJ
Rebekah Williams (External Trustee) – RW
Deborah Andrews (Student Trustee) – DA
Isobel Lines (Student Trustee) - IL

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 Ivan Steblyuk (Student Trustee) – IS and Melanie Brittain (External Trustee) - MB

2. Minutes of the last meeting

One amendment was needed to RW's initials which were recorded as RS under agenda item 12; Appointment of Supervising Trustee.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 The terms of reference had been updated.
- 3.2 The Finance manager had been invited to the board meeting.
- 3.3 SW and HL had been liaising with Worcester Bid regarding potential opportunities for closer collaboration but the Chief Executive who had been very enthusiastic was now leaving and so they were awaiting news on her replacement.

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

None declared.

5. Chief Executive Officer Report

SW updated the board on key SU activities as follows:

- 5.1 The recent University Audit and Risk Committee had gone well. The committee requested for the format of Trustees' report at the front of the accounts to be amended to be more of a story of challenges and successes, than bullet points, which SW will take on board. The committee were pleased with the overall trajectory of the SU but noted that some of the longer term aims of the SU needed to be more specific. It was noted though that due to the Officer roles

being a maximum of two years and the budget being set annually, this could be challenging.

- 5.2 SW and HL updated the board on plans for the new outdoor space by the Hangar, work for which would start in a few months.
- 5.3 SU staff sickness absence had been significantly higher than last year, with 23.5 days leave compared to 11 days leave to the same point last year. This included some compassionate leave. SW explained that this had had an impact on staff workloads.
- 5.4 The Hangar was performing better than last year. Tuesday nights had been particularly successful and there had been more student-led events (22 this year compared to 8 last year) which were better attended when organised by students.
- 5.5 The Totum summit for SU Officers had been cancelled by NUS. Income from Totum sales had decreased significantly.
- 5.6 The number of advice appointments were lower this year compared to last year, partly due to staff absence.
- 5.7 There had been some issues at City Campus so the SU was keen to keep working on making improvements for students there. HL was due to meet with University staff to discuss what improvements can be made. DA expressed that there was no space specifically for students at City Campus and enquired about the numbers of students at City Campus compared to St John's. The board had a brief discussion in relation to this point which had been raised by previous trustees.
- 5.8 There had been no progress on the University Sport Strategy and discussions on the proposed new model for delivery of sport were ongoing. The board discussed the University sport offer and some of the barriers and issues within the delivery of sport. MH informed the Board that some of the developments included a new 3G pitch on the current hockey pitch and a new 4G pitch in 2021 to replace the current 3G pitch.
RW questioned how recreational sport could be developed and IL suggested that more sports clubs should hold weekly drop-in sessions which are non-committal, similar to those that Equestrian run weekly.
RW suggested applying for a Sport England Grant which the SU would need to be cautious about applying for as there would need to be a plan for what the grant would be spent on.
Due to RW's links in sport it was agreed that she would meet with SW and the SU Sport Development Coordinator to discuss further initiatives for sport which would include the possibility of a partnership with Freedom Leisure.
- Action:** RW to meet with SW and Sophie Smith re possible sports grants
- 5.9 SW updated the board on the WorcTogether initiative which is a three-way partnership between the University, Barclays and Sanctuary Housing. All students had been DBS checked and nine were still involved in the project volunteering in care homes managed by Sanctuary Housing. It was noted that many students were still not logging their volunteering hours and so some work was needed to promote the v-log.

- 5.10 The governance review was progressing well with more engagement from an increasingly diverse student population.

6. SU reserves bank account

- 6.1 RC had done some research on the top 10 bank accounts for reserves as recommended by Money Saving Expert. RC advised the Board regarding the different options available and the board asked questions such as notice periods for withdrawing funds, how often the reserves are actually accessed and consideration of the financial compensation scheme. After further discussion the board agreed that RC would do some further research on the Co-op and Redwood accounts and MB would be consulted in the process.

Action: RC to conduct further research on Co-op and Redwood accounts

7. Monthly management accounts

- 7.1 Student wages were above budget at present but justifiable. They were being monitored closely by department heads and at budget reviews to ensure costs were within budget.
- 7.2 In the Hangar, the pool table was popular with students. There had been a slow uptake for the shuffle table but activities were being planned to boost its usage.
- 7.3 The Hangar Bar was doing well with external bookings remaining a key source of income. The SU was proactively promoting the Hangar to university staff as well as for external bookings. The marketing department were developing the external Hangar webpage to further help promote the Hangar as a venue.
- 7.4 Welcome Week income was higher than last year and the SU was now working with companies to encourage them to visit the SU at other times of the year too.

8. Risk register

- 8.1 The risk register had been updated. Notable change was a new risk in relation to the Advice Service and there only being one staff member in the organisation who could provide advice to students.
The board approved the revised risk register.

9. Matrix of delegated responsibility

- 9.1 The board had been sent a summary of changes to the matrix which the board approved.

10. Draft annual impact report

- 10.1 The Marketing and Communications Coordinator had taken the lead in the production of the impact report this year and it is envisaged that it will be a great publication. RW asked who the readers of the impact report would be and SW explained that it would be available to download from the SU website for any reader. All students would also be sent a copy by email as well as VIP's (who could also request a hard copy). All those mentioned in the impact report would be sent a hard copy.
- 10.2 RW questioned whether students would read the impact report as it is 60 pages long and suggested that a 2-3 page infographic at the start of the report may lead

to better engagement. DA also recommended that the infographic be displayed on digital boards to promote the impact report. SW welcomed the suggestions and would ask the marketing team to work on this. It was hoped that the impact report would be ready for circulation before the Christmas break.

Action: SW to inform marketing team regarding suggestions for impact report.

11. Board Sub-committees

11.1 MP updated the board on key discussions from the HR subcommittee which included:

- probationary progress for new staff
- An update on sickness absence
- An update on the key discussions at the Staff Consultative forum.
- Strategic developments in HR including a proposed review of the staff handbook as well as salary reviews and benchmarking.

11.2 Updates from the Finance subcommittee included:

- October accounts
- The pool and shuffle tables
- An update on plans for the new wellbeing garden outside the Hangar, including costs and seeking further quotes with a detailed specification of the work to be carried out. Estates had also confirmed that the SU does not own the outdoor space, that the outdoor space is University owned land and so they would have control over its future use. This was not considered a material risk as long as the Vice Chancellor's approval was sought, which would form part of the discussions.
- It was hoped that the wellbeing garden would be completed ready for use by final year students on Dissy Day in May.

12. Officers' report

12.1 MH, MP and HL updated the board on various recent SU activities, as follows:

- Some successful events had been held for Mental Health week including a darts night.
- Fundraising during RAG week was a huge success and collections were up by 300% compared to the previous RAG week.
- The Diwali event had gone well and had resulted in the formation of a new Bhangra society which was being well-supported by some international students.
- Discussions for Varsity planning were under way and it was confirmed that Varsity would take place earlier this year
- The new TeamWorc Points system had been implemented for clubs and societies to gain Bronze, Silver or Gold accreditation through their activities for a range of incentives. This appeared to have been embraced by the clubs and societies.
- Discussions were on-going with the University regarding the Applicant to Active initiative aimed at improving prospective students' awareness of what they can get involved in at University.
- The new Academic Representation system had been well received with more reps coming on board this year.

- Education council had also met and formed a number of sub groups to progress key activities, such as Change Week.
- At a recent AROG meeting, MP had pushed for improved visibility of the Course Reps via the MyDay app, which appears to have been well received.
- There was a good turn-out at the Course Rep Forum with 30 students attending.
- At the Board of Governors meeting, SW had been commended for her work at improving the running of the Students' Union over the last few years.
- The Night Bus had been running for a second semester at a cost of £260/night. It was felt that at this cost it probably couldn't continue to run in the next academic year unless external funding could be sourced. This was already being looked into but there had been no interest as yet. It was also noted that some students did not know when the Night Bus operated so it was suggested that an electric notice board at Tramps nightclub displaying the departure times for the Night Bus may be useful to increase demand for the service. It was also suggested that the University Sustainability committee should be approached with regards to funding the Night Bus. If the committee was not amenable to the idea, Cathedral Cars would be approached to provide a night service.

13. Welcome Week Survey report

In total, 127 responses had been received on the Welcome Week Survey, which equated to an 11% response rate. Slightly more 1st year students responded this year. The general response to Welcome Week events had been positive. Some students fed back that there were not enough events that did not involve alcohol. The board discussed this and it was noted that it was difficult to overcome the perception that most events at the Hangar are drink-related, which they are not. It was hoped that the current gaming atmosphere in the Hangar (pool and shuffle tables as well as darts) may encourage more non-drinkers to use the venue.

14. Autumn Elections report

The Board received a paper on the above. There had been fewer candidates running this year for the Part Time Officer and Student Council positions and, also, fewer contested positions. It was noted that if the proposed governance review is approved then the Autumn Elections would no longer take place.

15. Executive Committee minutes

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on Friday 6th December and so an update would be provided at the next board meeting.

16. Student Council Summary

Three new societies were approved; Bhangra, Finnish and Shout (journalism)
The Council had commended the part time officers who had been pro-active in arranging a few campaigns to help reach out to students. Attendance from part time officers at Student Council was good this year so far and it was suggested that the Officers were keen to encourage them to raise items for discussion.

17. Board of Governors summary

HL and MP attended the Board of Governors meeting yesterday. An update was given on discussions which included fire safety on campus and registering to vote. The SU was commended on their work in supporting students.
 [Commercial in confidence]

18. Any Other Business

None

Date of next meeting: 28th January 2020.

Summary of Actions:

Action	For	To be completed by
SF RC to conduct further research on Co-op and Redwood accounts	RC	asap
RW and SW to meet regarding potential funding grants for rec sport	RW/SW	asap
SW to inform marketing team regarding infographic for impact report	SW	asap